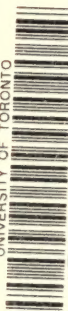


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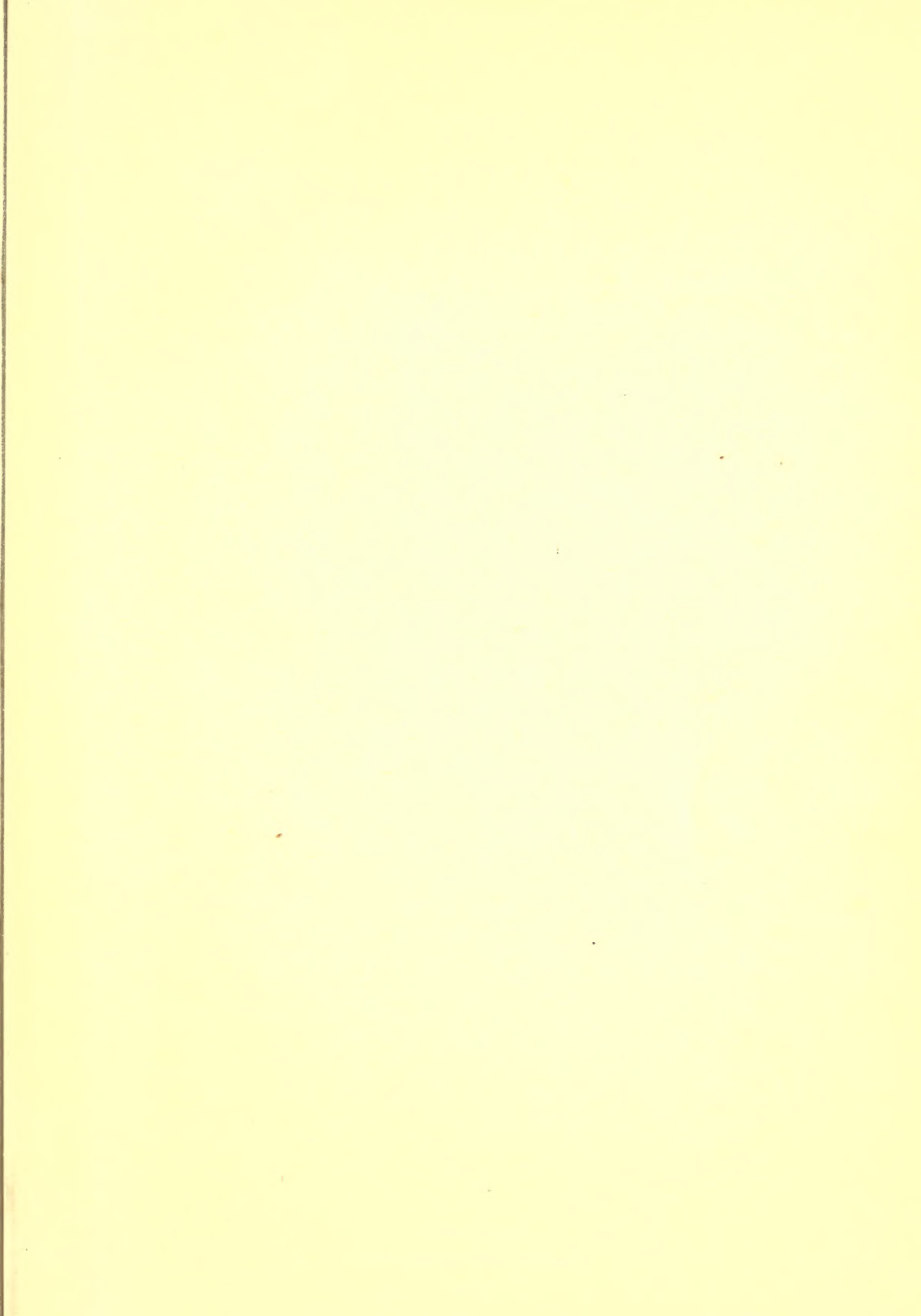


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# THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY

BY  
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## THE WORKS OF HENRI BERGSON.

(This bibliography has been certified as complete by Professor Bergson in a letter written April, 1912. There are, however, published in the *Séances et travaux de l'academie des sciences morales et politiques* many short reports on various books. These have been omitted from this bibliography.

Five titles are marked with an asterisk \*. These represent the only works by Professor Bergson that have been inaccessible to the writer of this essay.

The abbreviations of titles that are used in the text are indicated in brackets.)

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## PREFACE.

THIS essay is based upon a thorough examination of all Bergson's writings. Although the treatment of any special topic is far from full, references are given under each section, in order that the reader may be able to consult all that Bergson himself has to say on each subject.

The writer wishes to express her indebtedness to Professor Dewey. The influence of his thought on her must be evident to all, particularly in those sections dealing with ethics. Although the conclusions reached may not be endorsed by him, the point of view from which these sections have been written is largely due to the fact that the writer has been privileged to study under him.





## INTRODUCTION.

ETHICS deals with human conduct considered as right or wrong, good or bad. It must, accordingly, include both the given and the ideal, the "is" and the "ought-to-be" of human action. The "is" must be viewed in the light of the "ought-to-be," and, again, the "ought-to-be" can only be determined with reference to the "is."

It is thus essential that we gain an objective view of the facts of human nature—of the individual life and of society. We must find in what way human activity is conditioned and how far it is effective in producing changes. In these concrete facts of life we have the potentialities of what ought to be and the hindrances to its fulfilment. It is here, then, that we must seek to discover the ideal and with it once more return to judge the given.

Now, in its examination of these facts, ethical theory must make use of certain hypotheses. All theory, in order to obtain a coördination of its data, involves the use of hypotheses. These hypotheses must be based on the facts they seek to explain, and their adequacy must be tested, once more, by reference to these facts.

We are now more prepared to see what is involved in the discovery of the ethical implications of a philosophy. Any philosophy, in so far as it furnishes points of view from which the facts of individual and social experience may be coördinated, has its implications in ethical theory.

Ethical theory may, of course, claim its complete independence of any system of metaphysics. It may form its own hypotheses from its own consideration of the facts of human experience. But if philosophy includes within it an unprejudiced observation and coördination of these same facts, then the spheres of philosophy and ethics will overlap. Ethics may derive its hypotheses from such a philosophy and still be true to an empirical method.

Ethical theory is, however, peculiar in the fact that it does not only seek to coördinate its data, but also involves the discovery of ideals. In the facts of human nature it must discern the direction of the fullest human development. Here, too, ethics has complete right to its independence of any external point of view, any ready-made ideals, furnished by metaphysics. But here, too, philosophy may be covering the same ground, and from its consideration of human experience may be lead to the discovery of the ideal development of humanity.

Philosophy, it is true, may very probably go further. It may see in this direction of human development part of a vaster process. It may even see in it the fulfilment of some cosmic purpose. Here philosophy and ethical theory may part company. Ethics need not link its discovery of the good in human experience onto any metaphysical or religious view as to the meaning or the purpose of life. Indeed, the good must always be followed for its own sake.

Ethics must, however, have the fullest possible insight into its data. Human experience may prove itself to have depths in which it senses its union with forces going beyond it. If this be the case, the suggestions philosophy has to offer as to such forces are of the greatest interest to ethical theory. The moral life then acquires fuller and deeper meaning.

We shall soon see that the very heart of Bergson's philosophy is his insistence upon the fact that experience has depths. Accordingly, we are justified in including among the ethical implications of his philosophy, not only a view of the facts of individual and social experience, but also any vision we may reach of the meaning of the moral life as part of life in general.

Our first task must be to gain an adequate view of human life from the standpoint of Bergson's thought. When this has been accomplished we may ask if, on this basis, we can trace an objective good in the structure of things. In other words, is there any justification for believing that life has tended towards the development of values, or even that it has evolved in view of such a development. In either case, we should then obtain objective ideals or goods for life in general, for society, and for the individual. On the basis of these the intrinsic value of human ideals could be appraised. Human conduct in so far as it furthered objective ideals would be right conduct.

Once such an objective basis has been established another side of the whole matter presents itself. We must consider moral experience on its subjective side. The meaning of the moral life from the point of view of the individual and of society must be discussed.

Bergson himself has not as yet developed any theory of ethics, although he is reported to be engaged on the study of the subject.<sup>1</sup> He cannot, however, have been primarily interested in ethics. If he had been, it is probable that not only would he have given expression to the ethical implications of his thought, but his philosophy itself would have dwelt on some aspects of experience which it either underemphasizes or omits.

The vital part of a man's philosophy is his interpretation

<sup>1</sup>*New York Times*, March 10, 1912; Feb. 22, 1914.



of experience. Reality is refracted through the medium of his personality. His own training and opportunities and the accumulated knowledge of his day furnish him with his material, but to this he gives new form and a unique meaning. Bergson, combining in himself the scientist and the poet, gives us in his thought an unparalleled blending of artistic vision and scientific analysis.

Throughout he is led by the clue that change is the "stuff" of all things; meanings must be sought as they emerge in action. We shall, however, endeavor to show that Bergson has not considered what seem to be some of the most striking implications of his own insistence on the fundamental reality of the dynamic. And, further, that these very omissions have deprived his philosophy of some of the material fundamental to ethical theory.

With the attempted filling in of this material some clear-cut distinctions which appear in Bergson's writings are modified. Such modifications, however, appear to be in keeping with the underlying tenor of his views, rather than in any way militating against them.

We may now briefly suggest those facts which, on the basis of Bergson's view of life, seem to be of fundamental importance to ethics. It will be the chief purpose of this essay to explain and justify the following outline.

For Bergson philosophy is vision, and although such a standpoint does not necessarily involve a lack of emphasis on the active personal attitude towards life, yet in Bergson's case, it seems to have to some extent limited his thought. In particular he has underemphasized an important aspect of his own view of intuition. He merely mentions the power our intuition of duration has of going beyond itself, of linking us up with all life. It is interesting to note that it is in his later writings that Bergson dwells most on the essential unity of all things. For instance, he says: "The deeper we plunge into duration, the nearer we feel ourselves approach the principle in which we participate, and whose eternity . . . is one of life and motion. How otherwise can we live and move in it?"<sup>1</sup> And again: "The matter and life that are in the world are also in us: the forces that work in all things we also feel in us. Whatever be the intimate essence of what is and of what is in the making, we are of it."<sup>2</sup> Briefly, in fact, "ist nicht der Kern der Natur Menschen im Herzen?" But these are isolated passages; this important aspect of intuition is left undeveloped.

If life may be considered as in some degree an interpenetration of all durations, we shall then be in a position to develop

<sup>1</sup>Perc. du chang., p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, pp. 823-824.

a view of human society. It is in his discussion of society that Bergson's most striking omission occurs. He has not in any way followed out his own fundamental view of experience so far as regards society. It is only the more superficial experience of humanity, taken collectively, that is anywhere dealt with—the practical life of action on the material environment.

Again, returning to the principle of life in general of which Bergson speaks in one of the passages just quoted, it will be found that here, too, there are omissions of what would seem quite legitimately implied. Here, too, some modification must be made. The "stuff" of all things is mobility and duration. But pure duration is creation, and this implies some direction or directions of struggle. On this subject Bergson has something to say, but he does not deal with it at any length. And yet, in this matter of directions, there is involved the question of the purpose of life and creation. If there is purpose, its achievement must be the good in things, and the very heart of ethics should be the persistent attempt to discern and follow its direction.

Through such an investigation we shall attempt to get a realization of the nature of life in general, of society, and of the individual. At the same time we shall hope to be led, through the consideration of these materials which ethics has at its disposal, to some discernment of the purposes of life and so reach not only the "is" but something of the "ought-to-be." Objectively, there would be the "ought-to-be" of society and of the individual, the following out of their purposes as they are implied in that of life in general.

The problem of this essay is a difficult one. Although we must limit ourselves to that which has direct bearing on our subject, yet we must at the same time gain some view of Bergson's thought as a whole. No partial view can grasp his meaning. Far less could such a view reach further meanings than those already found. Bergson's philosophy is a vision, and through his inimitable style he has been able to suggest this vision to his readers. Even so, the language of every day often fails him; it is incommensurable with all he means. His frequent and striking analogies bear witness to this fact. In particular, it is his most fundamental views which are furthest removed from our ordinary modes of thought and are thus inexpressible in direct language.

We shall attempt to treat Bergson's thought, as he himself suggests we should do in order to gain a view of the meaning of a philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This involves seeking for his "center of force," the point at which he most nearly touches reality, and

<sup>1</sup>Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, p. 820; and Maine de Biran, *Mém. de l'acad. des sci. mor. et pol.*, 1907, vol. xxv, pp. 810, 820.

whence, receiving an impetus, he evolves his thought. Starting from this "center of force," we should be able to follow the underlying current of Bergson's thought and reproduce those aspects of it which are essential to the task we have in hand.<sup>1</sup>

Bergson's philosophy has, of course, been a growth. Through continually further study, he has been led to the discovery of new meanings, and, in the light of some of these, distinctions made in his earlier writings are to some extent modified. In such cases we shall attempt to present his views in their latest formulation.

We have taken as Bergson's "center of force" the intuition of duration. In the spirit of his whole philosophy we shall find the meaning of duration to lie in the fact, that experience has varying degrees of depth and of consequent tension. "Tensional" experience is the term used in this essay to describe the intermingling of lived experience and of the experience which is of increasing practical use the more superficial it becomes. The all-important thing to grasp is that everything is the result of some blending of tendencies.

In presenting such a view, distinctions must be made whose meaning can only be reached as they take their place once more in the medium whence they have been drawn. All of Bergson's thought is so interrelated, that on no point can final definition be attained until all has been said.

Throughout we must remember that our description of tensional experience is but an image, and as such there is a danger that we should conceive it too spatially. Perhaps this tendency may be mitigated if we endeavor to think that the degrees of tension, that is of depths of lived experience and of fuller reality, represent the degrees whereby spatiality is drawn together in what Bergson himself suggests may be another dimension.<sup>2</sup> Such an artifice may not present any very clear meaning, but it at least guards against a false meaning.

Let us now turn to the argument of this essay and indicate the bearing each topic has upon our problem. It is evident we must start with a discussion of experience and the distinctions which Bergson makes within it.

Beginning with *immediate experience* we find that experience has depths. The sections on *duration* and *motion and change* analyze internal and external experience somewhat more fully and bring out in particular Bergson's view of duration.

We are now prepared to give some account of the theory of

<sup>1</sup>Such a presentation of the fundamentals of Bergson's philosophy does not follow its chronological development. We may here suggest that the clue to the progress of his thought may be found in the fact that, in his successive writings, are presented different stages in a new solution of the problem of matter and mind.

<sup>2</sup>Perc. du chang., p. 35.

knowledge based on such a view of experience. This is especially important in that one form of knowledge is intuition, and, as we have already seen, a modification and development of Bergson's view of intuition furnishes us with some of the facts most fundamental to ethics. The question of *intuition and intellect* is also essential to a future discussion of moral knowledge.

Intellect and intuition, the forms of knowledge adapted respectively to grasp the more real and the more superficial aspects of experience, have their spheres and their methods. *Science and philosophy* are their respective products. It has been suggested that Bergson's view of philosophy may be in some degree contributory to the fact that he has not written on ethics. An account of philosophic method is accordingly most important. Science, on the other hand, need be dealt with no further than is required by such an account.

The task of the philosopher is vision, and this at once suggests some comparison of *art and philosophy*. So far we have been engaged in an exposition of Bergson's own views. In this section, however, we try to distinguish between the ideas of vision and of mere artistic appreciation. Only thus can the necessary emphasis be laid on the active and sympathetic side of vision.

We may now ask what is *the meaning of reality* according to the view of experience here held. A certain unity can be given to all that precedes, through a consideration of Bergson's meaning when he maintains that experience has different degrees of tension and depth. In this section, too, ambiguities in the two important terms, "consciousness" and "knowledge," are discussed.

Once such a background is obtained we may turn to *ethics*. Chapter I concludes with a brief indication of the general bearing of Bergson's philosophy on ethics. Such developments of his thought are mentioned not solely on their own account. They are important in that they give us the general direction of the theory of ethics which we shall be able to suggest when the facts fundamental to this theory have been established.

To reach these facts we need some account of life in all its forms. In Chapter II the individual will be first considered, for Bergson's own starting point is frankly that of the individual's consciousness of his personal duration. But, in beginning thus, the meaning and relation of subjective and objective, of internal and external, and finally of matter and consciousness, will come to be determined. We shall thus be led from the individual to the world in general.

Bergson's view of the relation of matter and mind is fundamental to our argument. Accordingly we must start with an



account of his theories of *perception* and *memory*. We are now ready to consider the meaning of *freedom*. This section is of importance in connection with the future treatment of moral responsibility. The relation of the ideas of freedom and creation further necessitates some account of Bergson's analysis of *mental effort*, and of the process of creation and invention.

We are thus led to the all-important subject of *personality*. The nature and meaning of the self are fundamental to all that follows. Here we reach the crucial point of the under-emphasis on that aspect of intuition which is of most importance to ethics. Through elaboration of this point, we hope to show that the individual in his deeper experience draws nearer to the principle of life in all its manifestations. But some account of these manifestations is required. We must supplement our treatment of the individual by outlining Bergson's view of *creative evolution* and of life in the world.

Chapter II closes with a discussion of the creative activity of the *principle of life*. Through the development of the same point which was made in connection with personality it is held that purpose may be traced in all creation—not purpose in the sense of a definite plan, but as a direction of development.

In Chapter III we turn to human society. In the first place *Bergson's conception of society* must be given; then we shall be prepared to suggest how this may be modified and supplemented by a *broader view*. We may now discern something of the ideal development of human society and we find this to involve the fullest development of its individual members. Through this reciprocal development the purpose of the life-principle as manifested in humanity is found to accomplish itself. Thus we may trace an objective good and absolute values whence all human values derive their significance.

If there be a direction of development whose furtherance is the good, how is this direction known in general and in the specific situations which make up human life? The attempt is made to answer this question in the section on *the good and how it is known*. Again we must ask how far the individual is free to discover and to follow the direction of the good, and accordingly what is meant by moral responsibility. *Voluntary action and responsibility* is the title of our next section.

The last section of this essay deals with *the moral life as a growth*, in order to emphasize the fact that process and change are fundamental in any theory claiming Bergson's philosophy as its basis. We deal here with the moral growth of the individual through social influences and again with social growth through individual initiative. In this process of growth the most important distinctions of moral theory are found to have their place.



## CHAPTER I.

### EXPERIENCE AND REALITY.

#### IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE.<sup>1</sup>

Life, experience, reality—these are, from the standpoint of immediacy, synonymous terms; and it is at the point of view of immediacy that empiricism worthy of the name must, in the first instance, place itself. It must seek purely and simply for what is, and it must seek for all that is. As Bergson says: "empiricism must tread the long and arduous paths of facts"<sup>2</sup> and seek "to follow reality in all its windings."<sup>3</sup> No single detail of experience, infinitely rich, varied and complex as it is, can empiricism afford to disregard; however vague and fleeting such a detail may be, it is a part of experience and must not be neglected.

But such observation requires effort. In the first place, preconceived ideas must, as far as possible, be eliminated. There is no question here of conceivability or inconceivability, possibility or impossibility; whatever is part of life and of experience, as such is positive and is real in its quality of immediacy. And not only must we endeavor to observe, but we must take care that our observation is as exhaustive as possible. It is at once evident that we are aware of different parts of experience in differing degrees. Indeed, if we may so express it, there is much in experience that we are not aware of at all. Let us take any ordinary experience of something perceived in the world around us—say the words I am writing on this page. The words I am most clearly aware of at the moment are, in the first place, set in an indefinite spatial context. In being aware of them, I am also aware of the paper, the table, the room, and so on in decreasing degrees of clearness. Where can one set any limit to a context all parts of which are in continuity? The parts that appear at first so clear-cut are all interacting with the experience in the focus of attention; all parts of it, in a sense, are penetrating one another.

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 33-71; L'eff. intell., *Rev. phil.*, vol. liii, pp. 23, 25-27; note on the word, "immédiat," *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. viii, pp. 331-333; L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, p. 823.

<sup>2</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Id., p. 54.

Again let us take another context of the same words on the paper; they are not only set in a spatial context; they have a meaning; the experience of them has, so to speak, depth. They may superficially appear to be a repetition, or nearly so, of some former experience, but this they cannot be. In some form or other all our past experience is influencing our present. This awareness I now have could not be the same if my past experience had been in any way different.

We thus find that this experience of what, in every day language, we call the outer world, presents itself to us in two forms according as we superficially observe or as we make the effort to go deeper. Its obvious tendency is to present itself to us in the form of facts in juxtaposition to other facts. Such facts are, for all practical purposes, repeated, and they tend to distinct multiplicity and spatiality. But if we go a little deeper, we find a tendency for this experience to present itself under the form of reciprocal interpenetration. It is true that, in its spatial context, this tendency may seem slight, but the moment we take experience as influenced by the past, that is, as an experience in time, we find this tendency much stronger.

Let us turn, then, to the form of experience where this latter tendency can be most clearly studied. Let us leave experience as spread out around us and turn to the unfolding of our experience in time. Here we shall at once reach the heart of the distinction between the two tendencies of experience; its superficial form, shown most clearly when we perceive facts juxtaposed in space, and its interpenetrating form shown best as it evolves in time. Here we have Bergson's "center of force."<sup>1</sup> From his insistence on this fundamental form of experience all his thought has sprung.<sup>2</sup>

#### DURATION.<sup>3</sup>

At any moment, what are we conscious of? First, we perceive more or less clearly defined objects all around us, and, at the same time, these perceptions call forth recollections that help us to interpret them. These recollections seem a part of us, drawn out, as it were, by perception; looking back on them, we imagine them as distinct from one another, arranged somehow in the order of their occurrence. We feel tendencies to

<sup>1</sup>L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, p. 820.

<sup>2</sup>Letter, *Rev. phil.*, vol. ix, p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Donn. imméd., pp. 57-106; Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 4-9, 17-23; L'Evol. créat., pp. 5-12, 42, 49-50, 323, 343, 367-369, 382; Percep. du chang., pp. 17, 26-36; L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, pp. 823, 826-827.



act, and perhaps some emotion or affection. As we watch ourselves, these seem distinct states, and the more we analyze, the better defined do they become. They seem, too, to repeat former states. But if, instead of watching and analyzing, we make an effort to reach what we feel is our very selves, our living and acting selves, the result is very different. There are no longer distinct states; they fuse and interpenetrate till there is simply a continuity, indivisible perpetual becoming. In this ceaseless change, no one moment is the same as any other moment; there is complete qualitative heterogeneity and incommensurability between past and present. No sensation, no feeling can repeat itself. The present is forever unforeseeable and new, though organized with the past and so animated by a common life that the whole soul may express itself in one state. This indivisible continuity of change is what Bergson calls duration. He claims that it is "the clearest thing in the world";<sup>1</sup> it is simply time perceived as indivisible. No roundabout methods will suffice to reach the consciousness of duration, "we must begin by placing ourselves in it."<sup>2</sup> It is experienced and lived time, the unfolding of our conscious life, of states that only become distinct when it suits us to divide them. When we speak of the present we really mean a certain interval of duration, and with an effort we find this interval to be extensible. The distinction between past and present is relative to the extension of the field of our attention. That in which we are not actually interested forthwith falls back into the past. Living as we do, with our attention turned almost ceaselessly to the future, the past as a whole seems dead to us, but it is there, following us ceaselessly, undivided from the present. In cases of accident, where the shock is so great as to disturb the normal direction of our attention, the past may once more become vivid and present.

Although duration is the very "stuff" of our experience, although we live it, it is almost impossible for us to represent it to ourselves. Duration is a qualitative multiplicity, yet it excludes all idea of reciprocal exteriority or juxtaposition, all idea of extension and number. It is an organic development, and yet this must not be considered as a growing quantity that can be measured.

But we and the things around us certainly appear to be in a time that can be measured, whose moments can be numbered. Looking backward, we represent to ourselves the coincidence of definite happenings with definite points of time which we picture as stretching backward in an ordered line

<sup>1</sup>*Percep. du chang.*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 323.

of moments. What is this time that has all the aspect of a homogeneous medium, and what relation does it bear to experienced time, that is, to duration?

The image of a continuous line implies the perception of a before and after given not purely in succession but simultaneously. So that order may be established between terms, these terms must first be distinguished, and then there must be comparison of their respective places. Again we are able to number the moments of this time. If we represent number to ourselves—not only the figure or word which we use for that number, we find that it is a collection or multiplicity of parts which, for the purpose of being counted, are provisionally considered as units, and as identical with one another. Their only distinction for this purpose is that they occupy different positions in space, for only in space can there be clear distinction of parts external to one another. Consequently, in the representation of number, space is necessarily involved.

To count the material objects we see and touch is easy enough; it can be done directly, for they appear to us as localized in space. But when we come to representations other than sight or touch, and still more to the purely affective states, some other method must be devised. The method seems pointed to at once by the way we count the objects of the external world. We distinguish them first in space and then combine them into a sum. Although this cannot here be done directly, it may be achieved by symbolical representation. It has already been seen how, at first sight, our states of consciousness appear as distinct and well-defined. It is only by going deep into ourselves that we discover the superficial nature of such distinct states; they represent just a certain way of looking at something that is itself pure succession and heterogeneity. Memory can arrange its recollections in a row in an ideal space, for past succession, no longer in the act of creation, can be represented in the form of juxtaposition. And so the illusion arises that our experience consists of distinct states arranged one after the other. As a matter of fact this is how we usually do represent it, but we should remember that it is only the aspect that conscious life takes when, so to speak, "refracted" through space.

Let us take some examples. We can follow a melody without any idea of distinct notes. If one of the notes is unduly emphasized, there is a qualitative change in the whole musical phrase, which, rather than the change in the length of a note as length, tells us of the mistake. Each note is representative of the whole and does not become isolated except to thought capable of abstraction. If we do cut the melody into distinct notes, it is because spatial images have been mixed with our impression of pure succession. In the same way, when the hour strikes

on the clock, we may get the qualitative impression of the sounds as a whole or we may count each sound by dissociating it and so in thought putting it in space. The two types of multiplicity represented in each case are absolutely different. Multiplicity may be qualitative, in which case it is a multiplicity of organization, a multiplicity that has no connection with number. Or, again, we may have quantitative multiplicity where the parts are distinct, space consequently being involved. It is by using this second type of multiplicity as a sign of the first that we are able to number and arrange all those facts that cannot be directly counted. Time taken as a homogeneous medium is just the spatial symbol of real time or duration. It serves as a common denominator to all possible concrete durations, and is represented by discontinuous moments replacing each other in an infinitely divided line. When we say that such and such a phenomenon took such and such a time, we are counting a number of units which have been agreed upon as a standard in this measurable time. Abstraction is made of the real stuff of that interval of time. Time as a homogeneous medium can scarcely be distinguished from space. For since a homogeneous medium is devoid of qualities, it is hard to see how there could be two such mediums distinct from one another. Measureable time is really a mixed idea for, in so far as it involves duration, it is succession and yet, in so far as it is homogeneous, there has been an intrusion into it of the idea of space.

It has been said that we usually represent time in what has been shown to be a symbolical fashion. The fact is that if there were not some such common denominator chaos would be the result, and social life and language would be completely impossible. What the mind does is to dissociate the internal life into separate states by means of space and then, taking these states in their most impersonal form, to give them names. We become so obsessed with this essentially useful idea of space that we can only with an effort see what is at the root of our experience. In addition, it is almost impossible for us to express this; language was not made to embody individual experience. It expresses only what is static, common and hence impersonal in the impressions of humanity and at least covers, if it does not crush, our individual experiences. But still the duration in which we act is continuity really lived, and this is very different from the artificial decomposition of duration in which it is useful for us to watch ourselves act.

Why, where order now reigns, should we try to reintroduce confusion? We have no reason to do so practically; but theoretically, if we wish to penetrate to the more fundamental aspect of things, it is obvious that this cannot be reconstructed from the symbols in which, for utilitarian purposes, we usually

express it. Further, the normal conditions of our experience are bound to be modified by this method of habitual symbolical representation.

#### MOTION AND CHANGE.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that duration is, for practical purposes, represented as motion in space. It seems that if a line measures the duration of a motion, duration can be divided into instants, just as the line can be divided into points. But here we are brought to the consideration of the general question of motion and change. Motion takes place in space, and so once more we return to experience in its spread-out character and are able to indicate more fully its tendency to assume two aspects. Once more the effort must be made to see and experience motion and change not only on the surface but deeply. When dealing with external objects we certainly need not represent them symbolically, yet there may be conditions making it useful, and thus usual, that we should perceive things in a superficial form.

Let us take a simple example of motion in space. If we lift a hand, what is our immediate experience? We have a simple muscular sensation and we see that the hand describes a certain interval, say *ab*. Now this interval of space can be divided into as many points of space as we wish, so we imagine that the motion itself can also be regarded as infinitely divisible. But we must distinguish between the act of motion and the space traversed. This act has duration which coincides with the internal aspect it has for consciousness; it is thus indivisible and escapes space, although the successive positions through which it passes are in space. For how can motion coincide with the immovable or be made up of immobilities? How is a moving object *at* a point in its path? It *passes* such a point and, if stopped, would *be* there. Of course, we could stop moving at any point in *ab*, say at *c*; but then this would not be one motion, but two motions; the sensation would be quite different. One motion, as a passage from rest to rest, is indivisible. Once the line *ab* has been traversed it may be taken to symbolize the act that is over and to measure the length of past time it occupied, but it cannot really represent the motion as it is in the making or in its duration. The points of the line *ab* are not in or under the motion, but we project them beneath it as so many places where a moving object might stop, when, by hypothesis, it does not do

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Donn. imméd., pp. 84-87; Mat et mém., pp. 207-235; Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 19-25; *Percep. du chang.*, passim.



so. They are, Bergson says, "not really positions but suppositions,"<sup>1</sup> merely points of view; and how can motion be constructed from such?

Once more, Bergson insists, motion, like duration, should be seized in its essence. Certainly our muscular sensation of motion gives us something fundamentally real, and so does our visual sensation. If we start with motion itself, we see that there is more in motion than in the immovable or than in the successive positions it passes through. We cannot derive motion from the motionless but, on the contrary, the effect of immobility is easily obtained when two moving objects are at rest relatively to one another. If two trains travel along parallel lines at the same velocity, they are relatively at rest. Now there never is true immobility if, by this term, absence of all motion is meant; but there is relative and apparent immobility in all cases analogous to that of the two trains. This situation is really the exception, but to us it appears normal, just because it allows us to act on things and let them act on us. Our action needs immobility, or at least the appearance of it; and so it is convenient for us to see in it something fundamental and in motion something superimposed on immobility. In our practical life two facts about motion are important: that it describes space and that, at each point of space, it might have stopped. This is why our tendency is to consider motion as though it were made up of a series of positions, as though it coincided with motionless points of space. We think that we can divide it indefinitely without noticing its natural divisions. All this is perfectly legitimate in ordinary practical life, but, if such a point of view is carried into theory, it makes us close our eyes to the most fundamental thing in experience.

So far we have been speaking of motion in space, but all that has here been said can, Bergson holds, be applied to all forms of change. All change is indivisible; and though we like to consider it as composed of a series of successive states, there is more in any change than its successive states. We have seen that our internal experience is fundamentally one continuous indivisible change of quality. Let us now deal with change in the things about us.

A material object presents itself to us as a system of qualities. Resistance and color take the central position, and the other qualities adhere to these two. But though we touch a body in a certain point in space, physics has established the fact that all parts of matter are in interaction with one another. As for the colored patch we see, we know it to be a series of infinitely rapid vibrations. Further, our perceptions change as a part of our ceaselessly changing personality. And so, within and with-

<sup>1</sup>Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, p. 19.

out, there is mobility. But, once more, in order that we may act on things, a condition of things is necessary analogous to the two trains. We need a static view of things and, if we have such conditions that the change which is ourselves is at rest relatively to the change which we call an object, we have the appearance that is called a state. The first function of perception is thus to seize a series of elementary changes in the form of quality—it, so to speak, condenses all these vibrations in a simple and stable state. As in the case of motion and the points of its trajectory, we at once proceed to recompose change with its states. Around us there is a moving continuity, but in it we dissociate two terms; permanence and change. Permanence we represent by bodies and change by homogeneous movements in space. Our action tends always towards certain centers; the eye cuts out these relatively invariable objects for us in the visual field and they become apparently independent. In practical experience, it is useful to distinguish between bodies and actions exercised on them. It is useful to fix the limit of the object where it can be touched, and we see in its action some indefinable thing that is detached and different from it. Even our auditory images are immediately attached to visual and tactual ones. In this way we re-establish continuity. For our perception only lets us seize from moment to moment the discontinuous effects of numberless vibrations. Change is everywhere deep down, but we localize it here and there on the surface of things, for this is the view of things that is useful to us. However, once more, if we wish to get at what is most fundamental, we must eliminate these practical habits of perception. We must take off the spectacles through which we are enabled to act on the things around us and try to look at these things in a disinterested fashion. By abstracting our action on things and the paths cut by perception in “the entanglement of reality,”<sup>1</sup> independency of bodies will be reabsorbed in universal interaction. In physics, the representation of all things by means of solid atoms acting and reacting on one another seems clear to us, but this is simply because contact is our means of acting on our environment. As a matter of fact, the solidity of the atom seems to dissolve more and more, the further physical research is carried. The support given to motion retreats further and further till it becomes so infinitely small that it is a mere concession to our ordinary method of looking at things. Force and matter thus draw together, converging to a common limit in continuity of change. It is useless to seek beneath change for what changes; change needs no support, it is itself fundamental.

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 12.

We have thus seen why experience immediately presents itself in two forms. Superficially we only perceive what is useful for our action. Man is in perpetual struggle with his environment; he must act on the things around him if he would preserve himself. And this is why it is so important for him to perceive things in the form most conducive to his being able to make use of them. Around him he perceives an extended continuity, but, in order to divide this as he wills, beneath concrete extension he spreads ideal space.<sup>1</sup> This space is a concept, a mere abstraction, the symbol of fixity an infinite divisibility. Nowhere do we perceive such an empty, homogeneous medium, devoid of qualities, of which every part is absolutely external to every other.

This idea of space is a reaction against the heterogeneity that is at the basis of experience. Of such service is this concept that, the more intelligent a being, the clearer is the idea of space. Many animals, Bergson suggests, cannot perceive space as in any sense homogeneous, since they travel immense distances seemingly through some sense of direction.

The idea of space is so inrooted in man that, as we have seen, he not only uses it to aid him in his action on the external world, but by its means he symbolically represents his own conscious life and the inner life of other beings. In order to distinguish its moments and to relate them to the existence of things about him, he imagines an abstract scheme of successive, homogeneous time. Homogeneous space and time are not properties of things; they are the abstract expression of our efforts at finding points of application in moving continuity within and without, in order that we may produce changes in it. They are the schemes of our action and it is through their use that experience appears to us in the first of the two forms that were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, as tending towards distinct multiplicity and spatiality. It tends also to repeat itself, for it is useful to us always to perceive things in terms of what has already been experienced. Only in this way can language and habits of action be formed. But even in the external world which most obviously appears in this form, it has been shown that a more fundamental experience finds continuity and perpetual interaction. Our inner life is more easily experienced as continuous even though we

<sup>1</sup>In *Donn. imméd.* Bergson treats the external world as being in pure conceived space and as not having duration. It is thus made to contrast absolutely with the internal life of duration having no connection with space. But from *Mat. et mém.* (cf. pp. 275 et seq. in particular p. 277) and his later writings, reality is seen to admit of no such clear-cut distinctions; it is a blending of tendencies; there are degrees of spatiality in extension, of which mathematical space is only the ideal limit, and degrees of tension in duration.

may be accustomed to see it in its superficial form. In it we experience duration and, noticing that not only conscious beings but all things around us also persist, we attribute duration to all things. This leads us to regard duration as a homogeneous medium in which states succeed one another in ourselves and in the world around.

But, in truth, all things have duration. Within and without, change, variability, interaction are what are most fundamental. Everything is in the making. But all change has duration. It is not only our own past that is preserved, but, in any one indivisible change, there is the conservation of the past in the present. Even the qualities we perceive are the result of vibrations, of concrete motion whose successive moments are united by a thread of quality. Such motion, Bergson thinks, cannot be without some analogy with our consciousness. It is the unfolding of a diluted, relaxed existence. In one moment of our intense life, we perceive enormous periods of it. On account of the short duration in which so many vibrations are contracted, their result, a quality, seems incommensurable with another quality, the result of a different set of vibrations. If we could live these lives, that is, adopt these slower rhythms, colors would pale and lengthen, Bergson suggests, till we approached nearer pure vibration. As it is, in the deeper notes of the scale we perceive vibrations united by quality. In this case, the motion is slow enough to comply with the rhythm of our duration. And so we have a vision of endless differing durations. Our consciousness lives a duration that has a determined rhythm, while there are durations of such infinitely quicker rhythm that, for instance, to live the life of the motion that we seize as a second of red light would take us 250 centuries at our rate of living.<sup>1</sup> We can also imagine a duration more tense than ours and, in fact, all degrees of tension. Bergson says that, if we really place ourselves in duration, we have "the feeling of a certain well-defined tension whose determination seems the choice between an infinite number of possible durations."<sup>2</sup> In our own experience of duration, we have given, as it were, the possibility of endless other durations whose rhythm would fix them in the scale of beings. Not only do we feel it to be the basis of our existence, but the "stuff" of all things. "To him installed in becoming, duration appears as the very life of things and the fundamental reality."<sup>3</sup> Succession is everywhere a fact. The velocity of the unfolding of our own conscious lives and of all that is around us seems to be absolute. The future is condemned

<sup>1</sup>Mat et mém., p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>Introd. met., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 343.



to succeed the past and is not given with it. Duration, Bergson says, is "a stream one cannot reascend";<sup>1</sup> "it gnaws things and leaves on them the imprint of its teeth; the same concrete reality never repeats itself."<sup>2</sup> Image after image is given to his readers to place them where they can realize the meaning and gain the intuition of duration. If we can only seize ourselves in a broad elastic present, we can dilate it backward and "push back the screen masking us from ourselves."<sup>3</sup> We should also be able to re seize the world around us, not only at an actual moment and superficially, but we should experience it more deeply organized with the past which gives it its impetus. At bottom all is change within and without. And concrete change has duration, or rather is duration; that is, there is in all things some analogy with our consciousness. By seizing what is fundamental in ourselves, we are led to see that this is at the basis of all things. To do this is to accustom ourselves, as Bergson says, to see all things *sub specie durationis*.<sup>4</sup> The more we do this, the more do we establish ourselves in pure duration and the closer are we to the fundamental nature of things.

INTELLECT AND INTUITION.<sup>5</sup>

In our practical life, to make such an effort to deepen our perception would only introduce confusion. We have seen that for our material needs perception cuts out from a broader field objects with distinct contours, motionless and in determined positions in space. It notes resemblances and neglects the heterogeneity of experience as much as possible. In fact it is the more superficial form of experience on which our every day life is based. Perception shows us things in the form in which they will best satisfy our needs. This explains why the artist who perceives without utilitarian purpose has a deeper and broader perception than other men.

So far we have tried to take the point of view of immediate perception, although there has necessarily been some mention

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Id., p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, p. 827.

<sup>4</sup>Id., p. 829, and *Percep. du chang.*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: *Introd. mét.*, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 1-36; L'Evol. créat., pp. i-viii, 147-212, 323-339; Notes on the words "immédiat" and "inconnaissable," *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. viii, pp. 331-333, 341; A propos d'un article de Mr. W. B. Pitkin intitulé James and Bergson, *Jl. of Phil. Psych. & Sc. Methods*, vol. vii, pp. 385-388; A propos de l'évolution de l'intelligence géométrique, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xvi, pp. 28-33; *Mat. et mém.*, pp. 169-176.

of representation. Now, not only are there gaps in our perception that we need to bridge, but we must understand the bearing of our perceptions if we would act with the greatest utility. Bergson's suggested derivation of general ideas is most ingenious. All forms of life seek to draw from their surroundings what is of practical use to them. To actions differing superficially, but alike in some essential detail, identical reactions come to be made. Such is the origin of what, in the human mind, develops into general ideas. Even man's perception, we have seen, is utilitarian. That side of any situation, whereby it can reply to some need, is picked out, and all differences of detail tend to be overlooked. To this useful side man replies each time in the same way, till the habit of doing so is formed. From resemblance that is thus felt and acted on, resemblance intelligently perceived and thought has been reached. From reflection on this operation, the general idea of class is formed, and the mind can then construct an unlimited number of classes. With the growth of language, due to the necessity of common action, the intellect has at its disposal a powerful instrument with which it can cover, by a limited number of terms, an unlimited number of objects, and thus carry its tendency to generalization to a high degree. This is just one important example of the evolution of intellect. Developed through the ages in the struggle of living beings with the material environment, it has always been the ally and the instrument of action. On the line of evolution leading through the vertebrates to man, it has gradually been evolved until, in man, it triumphs. Bergson dates the appearance of man on earth from the time when artificial tools were made and used. When matter was for the first time transformed into an instrument of further action on itself, man's final conquest over it was assured.

It is thus essentially with matter that the intellect has to do. Its categories and laws are formed so that we may have power over matter, so that it may illuminate present action and foresee its results. From this point of view, its usual procedure becomes clear. Distinct perception has already begun the work now carried on and pushed further by the intellect. It is not a disinterested knowledge the intellect is seeking; it wants to know in order to satisfy some need, and a concept is thus the mark of the attitude or action that is appropriate toward the object. What is not of material interest escapes us. To know, in the ordinary sense of the word, is to take concepts and, with them, to reconstruct a practical, simple equivalent of what we want to know. This intellectual equivalent bears at best the same relation to that from which it is extracted as a series of photographs bears to the reality

they picture.<sup>1</sup> Only a limited number of concepts have objective foundation; the rest are artificial in varying degrees. The farther they are removed from their origin, the more do they become simple symbols.

Action is essentially discontinuous and so is our knowledge of things. To know, that is, to foresee in order to act, is just to go from one arrangement between ourselves and the environment to another, oblivious to the intervals between such situations. Discontinuity is all the intellect can clearly represent. It is just as in a kaleidoscope, where the successive discontinuous patterns made by the bits of glass are all that interest the child.

Each action is a leap into the future. Intellect is essentially an anticipation of the future. But, in another sense, it is really retrospective for, although always leaping ahead to formulate future possibilities, it continually does this in terms of the past. And so we can see what a further characteristic of its schematic reconstruction of things must be. It only retains the aspect of repetition. In any situation, it isolates what resembles the already known and thus prepares the way for some familiar attitude or action. In that a concept covers many different objects, it cannot possibly give, of any one object, that which it individually is: it simply connects it with other objects already known.

Then, again, intellect needs solid points of application. The concept of space in which there is reciprocal externality is of the greatest importance to it. We have already seen how number implies space. The fact is that any number other than unity implies juxtaposition in space, and from this it follows that two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time. The impenetrability of matter is simply a logical necessity, not a real property of matter. Interpenetration cannot be clearly thought by the intellect, which is only at home among solids. Its natural tendency is to geometry, which is, indeed, immanent in distinct perception. In speaking of duration and motion we have already seen how intellect and distinct perception which prepares the way to intellect, spatialize and solidify all that they touch. Intellect is compelled to see only moments in becoming and positions in motion. This is natural, since it must fix changes and obtain elements that can be taken as motionless in order to have practical control. Its artificial reconstruction of mobility is made up of motionless views—a mere counterfeit, but of much more value for action. Once such a spatial reconstruction has been obtained, it can be taken apart and recomposed according

<sup>1</sup>The derivation of the word concept is suggestive in this connection: it means primarily a receptacle in which something is caught.

to any law. In fact, intellect, perception, and language all employ the same artifice as the cinematograph.<sup>1</sup> From an endless number of different becomings they derive the mere abstraction of becoming in general and to this, in each particular case, they add images of distinct states. Just so we have the motion in the moving picture machine and the series of distinct views portraying the different scenes.

Nothing could be more adequate or legitimate than the procedure of the intellect so far as action is concerned and so far as we are dealing with experience that lends itself to our action on it. It was formed simply in the process of such action, consequently it is here that its forms of thought apply. But, so far as concerns the other form of experience which is of no practical use to us, there is no guarantee that intellect is in any way adapted to deal with it. And yet this is precisely the field that it has presumptuously sought to give an account of in metaphysics. What it in reality does is simply to apply the concepts applicable in the domain of matter to the more fundamental forms of experience, to experience as having duration. But each of its static definitions only applies to a made, dead thing and cannot possibly enclose a tendency that is in the making. Intellect turns around its object, endlessly multiplying external points of view, but it never can, in this way, reach what its object alone is. It has not, in any sense, immediate knowledge; its reconstruction of experience is an invention to use experience and thus alters the nature of its object instead of seizing and embodying this object.

In face of the continuity of duration and motion, intellect has seized discontinuity, pulverizing duration and motion to facilitate its action on things. In fact, the further it pushes its analysis, the further does this artificial fragmentation proceed. Another essential of fundamental experience was, we found, its ceaseless creation of the new, a continued heterogeneity. And yet it is against all intellectual habits of thought to admit that anything really new exists. We prefer to imagine that all the intellect is ignorant of is the preëxisting concept that each new object should enter. Real duration is eliminated from things; and such concepts as unity and multiplicity, indivisibility and endless divisibility, are put together in the vain hope of reproducing it.

Kant imagined that some perception of a supersensual order would be the only means of deliverance from the endless difficulties and contradictions into which the intellect falls. The truth is, he believed that ordinary clear-cut perceptions

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note, in this connection, that one of Plato's arguments against the Heraclitean doctrine of the flux is that it would destroy language. He says, "The maintainers of this doctrine have as yet no words in which to express themselves and must get a new language." *Theaetetus*, 183.



and intellect let us seize real motion, and he built his system on that basis. Such metaphysics was really born of Zeno's puzzles.<sup>1</sup> All Zeno's arguments imply that motion can be treated as space: motion and immobility are confused. All that he retained of motion and change was what does not move or change; that is, he took, instead of an immediate and complete perception of motion and change, a crystalization of perception for practical ends. The great value of such arguments is simply to show the impossibility of an *a priori* reconstruction of motion which is a fundamental part of experience. It is from motion and the fundamental facts of experience that we must start and then difficulties and contradictions disappear.

The clue to immediate knowledge of reality is thus found, not by going beyond the senses and consciousness, but by trying to go beyond the superficial form of experience that lends itself to man's material uses—the form in accordance with which his intellectual categories have developed. "Life," Bergson says, "transcends intelligence but not experience."<sup>2</sup> To do this, effort is required; preconceived ideas, useful habits of mind must be rejected in the attempt to get at what is deepest in experience. We have seen that there is a more fundamental form of experience. In trying to perceive this we are already attempting to reach the knowledge of the real that Bergson would have us seek. Perception which prepares our action on things cuts out part of what is, and conception, as it advances, is obliged to eliminate many qualitative differences, and thus what we usually perceive and conceive is but a very poor view of ourselves and the world around us. We cannot and we must not give up conception and reasoning, but, in speaking of the more fundamental form of experience, we can do what we have already tried to do, place ourselves in experience to broaden and deepen our perception of it.

Intellect, as we have seen, analyzes its object so as to connect it with what is already known. This knowledge cannot give what the object is in itself, for this is incommensurable with other objects. No external views can give its essence which is necessarily internal to it. Knowledge that is not of the intellect could only be obtained by a coincidence between the knower and the object known; it must be internal knowledge. Bergson calls such knowledge intuition: it is, he says, "that kind of intellectual sympathy by which one is carried to

<sup>1</sup>For Bergson's treatment of these see *L'Evol. créat.*, pp. 333-337; also *Donn. imméd.*, pp. 85-86; *Mat. et mém.*, pp. 211-213; *Percep. du chang.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup>A propos d'un article de Mr. W. B. Pitkin intitulé James and Bergson, *Jl. of Phil. Psych. and Sc. Methods*, vol. vii, p. 388.

the interior of an object to coincide with what is unique and inexpressible in it."<sup>1</sup> We shall see later, more fully, that there are many aspects of intuition, as there are of anything real. Its central meaning, however, is immediate purified perception; here we have at least the beginning of intuition, of which there may be many degrees. The deeper and intenser such perception, the more fully is our knowledge internal and intuitive.

Intuition is thus a placing of the mind in its most fundamental experience and the adoption of its ceaselessly changing direction. There is, as we saw, at least one such moving reality that we do seize directly: our own duration. We can seize it as a ceaselessly continuous heterogeneity; we can seize, flowing from it, the successive states into which distinct perception divides it; and we can see how are deduced from it the concepts intellect seeks to apply. We can, in the same way, deduce from a motion or any change, as we experience it, the successive positions or states in which it might at any moment be immobilized. The truth is that distinct perception is deducible from fuller perception, and by starting with intuition, we can see what intellect gives, how thesis and antithesis are evolved and how they are opposed and reconciled. If we start with intellectual concepts, intuition will never be reached. In intuition we reach the unity of the whole from which we can deduce the parts, but intellect always starts with the parts and with these constructs an artificial whole. Intuition is, however, hard to attain; constantly a new effort is required, the effort to place ourselves by a kind of intellectual dilation in our object, and thus to go from reality to concepts, from intuition to analysis, and not vice versa.

But can we really have an intuition of anything besides our own personality? Does not such knowledge enclose us within ourselves? A full answer to this question can only be reached in the succeeding chapter when the relation of individual life to life in general will be discussed. At present the answer has been hinted at in that duration, mobility and change were found to be the "stuff" of all things. The essence of life is everywhere the same, and individual life is only a part of life in general. In perception, as we shall soon see more fully, even matter seems to be immediately seized; we partially coincide with it. It thus becomes less incomprehensible that our intuition should not only reach our own individuality but be capable of penetrating what, in intellectual terms, must be treated as separate individuals and objects. Intuition, indeed, can only be the knowledge that is immanent in life itself. It is consciousness going deep and twisting itself to try to follow once more the direction of life, instead of translating everything into terms of past experience so as to illuminate the needs of action. Such knowledge has its origin in the same

<sup>1</sup>Introd. mét., *Rezv. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, p. 3.

impulse as instinct, though instinct proper is something quite different.

Human intellect is the culmination of one line of animal evolution. Another line ending with the bees and ants reaches the highest development of instinct. Instinct is just another method of acting on matter, and a more direct one than that furnished by intellect. Instead of involving principally the power of constructing artificial tools, it is the power to use instruments that are part of the animal's own body. Such instruments are perfect, but they are highly specialized and adaptable only to special objects. We, too, have some traces of instinct left in us, showing themselves in irrational antipathies and similar feelings; but these are far from pure instinct, being permeated with intelligence. As we shall see later, intellect and instinct, according to Bergson, began by interpenetrating and still present something of their common origin. As they became incompatible with one another, they were dissociated and developed on different lines of evolution.

Now, we not only have traces of instinct left, but around our logical conceptual thought, as a nucleus, there is a vague fringe. This must represent that substance at whose expense intellect was formed, by condensation, as it were, to serve as the instrument of the special form of our organization. The vague intuitions and impulses that belong here are of no particular use; they do not help our action on things. But, for that very reason, it may be presumed that they reach not only the surface of experience but its more fundamental aspects. Bergson has much faith in the immediate natural impressions of mankind, provided they are not those due to the illusions of practical life. Though we may at first discredit such impressions we are again and again led back to them. We reach them again by diving deep into experience. As we draw nearer the roots of life, we discover things long since discovered. Intuition awakes when some vital issue is at stake. But it is often vague and always discontinuous; it is incomplete, revealing only a part. In spite of this it should, through effort, be capable of indefinite completion. Intuition is instinct become disinterested; and, let us remember, it is due to intellect that intuition has thus been raised from instinct riveted to a special object and externalized in the means of acting on this object. Such instinct cannot search for the things that it alone can seize, and intellect, while seeking all things, cannot seize in its essence anything that lies beyond its own sphere. In intuition we have consciousness become capable of reflecting on itself and on life in general and of seizing these directly.

Bergson suggests how to place the mind in the position in which it can best make the effort to reach intuition. No

image can take the place of intuition, but, if we can assemble many images as disparate as possible, and then, in spite of their differences, hold them all in our attention, the mind will acquire a certain determined tension which places it in the attitude where, through effort, there is an intuition to be seized. The benefit of taking images instead of concepts is that they keep us in the concrete. They are intended not as descriptions, but to detach us from our ordinary habits of thought and to suggest a fresh mental attitude whereby we may recover some vision which is there but will not reveal itself. If it be granted that perception is extensible, there can be no objection to such a method.

There is nothing mysterious in this faculty of intuition. Any one engaging in literary composition exercises it to some degree. A writer must place himself in the heart of his subject-matter and there seek the impulse that sends him on the path where all his gathered material will be found. It is a direction of thought he seeks, not a thing. In the same way, as we shall see in a moment more fully, enormous masses of scientific observations should be gathered together so that, combined, they may lead the thinker to the point where an intuition is to be seized. Even to gain the clearest possible intuition of oneself a large number of psychological analyses are necessary.

Once an intuition has been seized and thought has received its impulse, that which was held in a state of concentration in intuition must be given extension by the intellect. Thus only may the data of intuition be expressed and applied. It is, accordingly, in the leap from the facts to an hypothesis co-ordinating them, that intuition may come into play. We may, indeed, speak of hypotheses as more or less intuitive in the sense that they are the expression of an intuition of greater or less intensity.

The work of intuition is not immune from testing any more than is that of the intellect. The test of immediate knowledge is its power to solve contradictions and problems. In numerous cases it simply does away with problems, for a large number of these have arisen from the fact that we have come to regard a certain intellectual symbolism as revealing reality to us; this, for instance, we saw was the case with the many problems that have gathered around the fact of motion. But, in other cases, where the problem is not one of those artificially created by the terms in which they are set, intuition must be tested through the hypotheses it supplies, by their ability to cover the facts. As the mind comes into increased touch with reality, contradictions due to the limitation of the field disappear. Such provisional contradictions are signs of expansion. An idea is clear if it may be made to become so: that is, if it can resolve difficulties, if it is rich in suggestion and extended



in its application. The clearness of an idea can only appear in the use made of it. It is thus through a certain expansion of the mind that intellectual progress is attained. Intuition carries its guarantee with it if it is accompanied by the expansion of thought.

Increasing knowledge of absolute reality is possible but it is an enterprise of the greatest difficulty. Such knowledge must be the result of endless soundings and retouchings.<sup>1</sup> A continual oscillation of the mind is necessary between two different attitudes, the intuitive attitude whereby we are put into contact with the continuity of reality and the intellectual attitude necessary for practical life. Intuition can only give us incomplete and fleeting visions, and, in our attempt to think reality less artificially, we must soon turn to intellectual forms. But we must also endeavor to recast these forms. By placing ourselves in things we find how current concepts are formed, and can either keep or modify them. No single effort at recasting can go far, for intuition is destroyed in the attempt that must be made to give its data precision. Once more we must return to continuity. Through this swaying, balancing process, intuition is reinforced; the mind increasingly digs deeper into reality and is led to divide it on fresh lines less and less relative to our practical needs. This is the intuitive method which Bergson seeks to substitute for the conceptual method that makes use of the intellect alone.

Bergson says that he is no anti-intellectualist. "Intellect and intuition do not oppose each other, save where intuition refuses to become more precise by coming into touch with facts scientifically studied, and where intellect, instead of confining itself to science proper, combines with this an unconscious and inconsistent metaphysic which in vain lays claim to scientific pretensions."<sup>2</sup> They are two complementary methods of knowledge, each of which has its own appropriate sphere. Science should be the work of intellect, but it is on intuition that philosophy must rest.

#### SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.<sup>3</sup>

The object of science is to furnish us with the very best means of acting on the things around us, of having influence over our environment. It studies nature in order to be able to hold

<sup>1</sup>In his lectures at Columbia University, February, 1913, Bergson dwelt more fully on this point than he has done in any of his published works.

<sup>2</sup>Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 33-71; Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 1-36; L'Evol. créat., pp. vi, vii, 32, 101, 189-193, 209-218, 363-370, 383-392; L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét.*

sway over her and to get from her man's material needs. We have seen how clear-cut perception prepares the way for our action on things; it is from this perception that science starts. The data in this perception are objects cut out in space and qualities as sensible continuities. Translating these objects into terms of the intellect, science has concepts and, corresponding to the continuity of perception, it also has mathematical relations or laws connecting its individual facts. We have seen that the qualities of things are much less relative to our needs than independent objects, and, in the same way, concepts, though of use to science as working schemes, are not of the same ultimate value as mathematical laws. Indeed, the further science goes, the more is matter resolved into such relations, expressing in this way the real indivisible continuity of all things. When science has accumulated its individual facts, the hypotheses whereby it seeks to coördinate them are, we have seen, more or less due to intuition; but once there has been such a flash of intuition, positive science is the work of pure intellect and has as its instrument analysis working mainly with symbols. It has to find its way of expression and application conformable to our usual habits of thought, so it gives us the closed concepts and the solid points of application of which we have need. It is only thus that it attains the highest degree of precision, and that it is able to extend its general method indefinitely over particular cases. Our usual knowledge of things and science are therefore on the same path, only science has attained a far higher degree of strictness. However far it goes, science can never lose sight of space and matter and so of geometry. Being the work of intellect, it is at its ease with the ready-made and the inert; when it studies life it has to take of it a static view and to see in it repetitions. Whatever is irreversible and irreducible in any form of becoming must escape science. It carries the foreseeing of results to the highest degree of accuracy, and the usual question of the scientific intellect is what condition must be given so that a certain phenomenon may be produced? Its favorite principle is: given the same cause, the same effect is produced.

It is thus evident that science does not deal with the real

*et de mor.*, vol. xix, pp. 809-827; Donn. imméd., pp. 87-91; Mat. et mém., pp. 202-206, 214-215; Remarks on the place . . . of philosophy in secondary education, *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. iii, p. 51; Remarks on the influence of his philosophy, *id.*, vol. viii, p. 21; A propos de l'évolution de l'intelligence géométrique, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xvi, pp. 30-31; Preface to G. Tarde, p. 5; A propos d'un article de Mr. W. B. Pitkin intitulé James and Bergson, *Jl. of Phil. Psych. and Sc. method*, vol. vii, pp. 385-388; Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, pp. 25-27, 44; Percep. du chang., pp. 5-17, 36; Presidential Address, Proc. of the Soc. for Psychical Research, vol. xxvi, pp. 469-471, 477-479.

"parts" of any becoming, but with its "elements," views taken of it. For instance, even psychology, in dealing with personality, must proceed in this way. It neglects the unique thing about any one personality which cannot be expressed in terms common to any other personality. Then, in this simplified person, it isolates such and such an aspect, representing some emotion or inclination, and takes this as a part of the person. With such elements, an external and schematic reconstruction is substituted for the real and internal organization.

When science studies life it is obvious that it can but give a symbolic account; even in its study of the things that lend themselves to its methods, it must, like the intellect, neglect real mobility and duration. In dealing with motion in space, it is a question always of the space traversed and of certain positions attained. For it, all motion is a series of positions; change, a series of qualities; becoming, a series of states. Still, as we shall see more fully later, science, when exercised on its proper object and as it advances further, penetrates more and more deeply into reality. In all those aspects of reality that tend toward spatiality, intellect is justified in using its methods, and gradually attains results that are less and less symbolic. It is only when it attacks the problems of life and consciousness in the same way that it becomes symbolic. Its perfect definitions can only apply to the ready-made, while vital tendencies are never quite realized. It is perfectly legitimate and also necessary for intellect to apply its own methods, but this is just where science needs to be completed by metaphysics, which is of quite a different nature.

Philosophers start with immediacy, but most of them at once apply to it the natural and artificial concepts of mind, and then, seeing that their data do not stay within these concepts, they doubt immediacy. Philosophy should not be a universal mathematics or a system of relations into which reality must be compressed. It will, in that case, Bergson says, become simply "a new scholasticism that has grown up around . . . the physics of Galileo as did the old scholasticism around Aristotle."<sup>1</sup> All our pretended empiricism is still full of the Cartesian idea of a universal mathematics, and the hope that all reality can be explained mechanically, when, as a matter of fact, such explanations only apply to a part of it. For example, psycho-physical parallelism is not a part of experience; it is an hypothesis inspired by this type of metaphysics; it is the translation into physiological language of the universal mechanism believed in by the Cartesians. But metaphysics, if it is anything, must be an attempt to break with symbols; it must not receive its facts ready-made from

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 399.

science, but must examine things in their relation to life itself. Philosophy should not be a false empiricism starting from a disarticulated experience adapted to our practical needs. Such empiricism always tends to simplicity; it uses the principles of physics and applies them to life and consciousness. It takes elements, aspects, symbols, and, with them, thinks to reconstruct its object, but the latter flies before it. It cannot satisfy the mind on any of the great and vital problems. Dogmatism, then, seeks to answer such problems, but it also has accepted the same detached, discontinuous phenomena and simply makes an arbitrary synthesis of them by filling the gaps artificially.

Metaphysics is totally artificial, if it is merely the building up of a system with preëxisting concepts and ideas. Antinomies arise, in that the procedure that serves the end of practical utility is thus applied to the disinterested consciousness of reality. We can see how concepts are extracted by thought from reality, but there is no way of reconstructing reality with them. This, Bergson says, is the very "*Leitmotiv*" of his thought.<sup>1</sup> Any such reconstruction is wholly artificial and condemns philosophy to the perpetual strife of rival schools, each of which lays stress on one or other of opposing pairs of concepts. In pure dialectics there is no system to which another cannot be opposed. In this case, there are many equally likely philosophies, and a critical philosophy, holding all knowledge to be relative and the basis of things totally inaccessible to the mind, necessarily has the last word. But both dogmatism and such scepticism rest on the same foundation; the supposition that all knowledge starts with concepts.

Metaphysics, however, should be true empiricism, pressing as closely as possible to the original itself. Bergson thinks that a need is now being everywhere felt for a philosophy which is really closer to the given than traditional philosophy, elaborated so largely by mathematicians, and that the future belongs to a philosophy which will take into account the whole of what is given. We are only sure of what experience gives us, and here we must not pick and choose, but accept experience integrally; any feeling, however vague, has as much claim to attention as distinct perception and thought. In the vague intuitions we have already spoken of, that vital sense which instinctively guesses something of the essence of life, we have one type of experience which philosophy has so far taken little account of. Only by starting out from the whole of experience can a right point of view be gained of the part.

Many of the things we experience elude all expression, but

<sup>1</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, p. 57.



usually some image which suggests them can be given. Indeed, one of the most striking characteristics of Bergson himself may be said to be his descriptions of such fundamental things. It is these fundamental things, the vital problems, which have very seldom been faced directly. Philosophy, however, should exist in order to grapple with such questions as the following: whence has humanity sprung? what are we? whither are we bound? And yet these questions have almost always had to depend for their solution on some abstract conception of the nature of Being. They have been made part of a rigid system with which they had to stand or fall. Metaphysics must draw nearer to life. What has been lived and experienced is the important thing rather than that which has been thought. Only by this effort at going down as deep as possible into life will any answer be obtained to the questions of most vital interest to human beings. But a criticism of knowledge is a very necessary preliminary to any such attempt, for otherwise the philosopher will accept pre-existing concepts and try to force the facts into them. If, on the other hand, he can, to a certain extent, see how and to what ends the intellect was formed, he will also be able in some measure to go beyond concepts.

The real task of the philosopher is thus to "*see*"; to examine life without thought of practical utility, and, since our ordinary intellectual habits and forms of thought are incommensurable with the more fundamental things of life, he must break with these. This, however, is only the negative part of his task. He must above all go to experience at its source, that is, before it is deflected in the direction of our needs—he must go to a purified experience which is disengaged, when it should be, from the categories intellect has constructed, in proportion as our action on things has progressed.

Metaphysics, as we have said, pretends to go beyond symbols. If there is a way of possessing reality instead of knowing it relatively, of seizing a thing in intuition otherwise than any translation or symbolism can represent it, this must be metaphysics. Philosophy must then consist in placing oneself in an object by an effort of intuition, otherwise all our knowledge of things is practical; metaphysics becomes a play of ideas. True philosophy is impossible if concepts cannot be transcended to reach intuition.

Bergson, as we have already seen, does not have recourse to any new faculties. By turning our attention from the practically interesting aspects of the universe, and by placing ourselves in our perception to enlarge and deepen it, we shall gradually come to have a more complete vision of things. Artists whose function is to see and to make us see what we do not naturally perceive already show us that such a thing

is possible. But that which only takes place now and then in the case of artists might, Bergson thinks, be accomplished by philosophers in a different way all the time. In such a philosophy nothing would be sacrificed of the given, and other philosophies could not be opposed to it, since nothing would be left outside it for others to seize on. Indeed, it will include more than is usually given, for, by exceptional effort, the senses and consciousness will deliver more than is naturally given. In an effort of intuition, consciousness places itself inside a concrete reality of which concepts can but enclose opposed views, thesis and antithesis. Bergson suggests that, to one who has not seen grey, but only black and white, it would never occur that these two interpenetrated to make grey. If, however, he should start from grey, it would be plain how this is accomplished. Philosophy would then spring from a constant effort to transcend our actual ideas by contact with fundamental experience.

Metaphysics will, of course, have to use concepts, but it is only itself when it goes beyond them. At least it must free itself from rigid ready-made ideas to create others very different from those in habitual use—supple, almost fluid representations, always ready to mould themselves on the fleeting forms of intuition. Such a method is very difficult. No longer can language give us the starting point, for to set a problem is to prejudice its solution. It is only when we have penetrated reality that we hold at once the solution of a problem and the terms in which it is set.

The history of philosophy has so far shown a ceaseless effort to lessen difficulties and contradictions and to measure, with a growing approximation, a reality which is incommensurable with our thought. Those who have now and then triumphed are souls full of simplicity, the souls of artists or poets—of those who are close to the life that is in things. What they bring is often vague in the form in which they express it, but those who have had the vision know its value.

Although such a conversion of the usual work of thought has never been carried out methodically, yet all through the history of thought all that is greatest and most likely to live has been furnished in this way. Every durable system is vivified, in part at least, by intuition. It is noticeable that divergencies are most striking among the disciples of the great masters of thought; it is they who, through analysis, have opposed concepts to one another and raised up the different schools. Even a master, in the development of what he brings, may be said to be his own disciple; at least, he is a disciple of his own intuition, the intuition that has put the work of analysis in motion. Although, in such systems, there may be complication of letter, there is simplicity of spirit. It is of course possible to recompose the

greater part of a man's philosophy from what he has read, seen, heard—the science and general thought of his time. But, after all attempts at relating his thoughts to preceding and contemporary thought, there is still something new. If one really enters his thought, instead of looking at it from many external points of view, the parts of it seem to interpenetrate until they gather together toward a point which, though unattainable, can be indefinitely approached. Here is his intuition—something so simple that, though he may have talked all his life, he has never quite expressed it. The growing complexity of any doctrine simply expresses the incommensurability of intuition and any means at man's disposal whereby it may be expressed. An image, as we have seen, will give us the feeling of an intuition better than any abstraction can. Such vanishing, fleeting images Bergson compares to the shadows of the intuition—from them we can catch a hint of the reality. In the image we find the doctrine of the philosopher freeing itself from the time and the place and circumstances on which it seemed to depend. The problems and the science and the philosophy of his day furnish him with the matter which he must use to give his thought concrete form, but his thought is not composed out of them, nor is it even an evolution from previous philosophy. A real philosopher has sought to say one thing all his life; he has seen or rather has had contact with reality in intuition, and this furnishes him with his impetus. As Bergson says: it is like an eddy of wind which raises the dust and thus becomes visible; whatever dust might be raised by it, the form would be the same.

It is noticeable that there is less variation in what a philosopher denies, at different periods of his thought, than in what he affirms. This, Bergson says, is due to the fact that the first and clearest manifestation of intuition is in what it negatives. For it much that has been previously accepted is impossible in view of a certain experience which it voices—possibly a vague and confused experience, but yet an absolutely decisive one. When we try to seize a master's thought in a mediating image, it is not the same image that he himself would have had; it is like a translation into a different language of the same original. The intuition itself, the very spirit of any man's doctrine, is no abstraction; it is, however inaccessible, the "center of force" whence all his doctrine has sprung. In it there is contained in tension what he expresses in extension. Just as, in speech, the sense governs words and phrases and could be expressed in endless different words and phrases, provided they bore the same relation to one another, so the intuition of a true philosopher gives him his direction of thought. If he is worthy of the name of philosopher, he does not build up a system out of preëxisting ideas, but, as he follows up his thought-impulse, he rediscovers such ideas in his path ready for him to use in order to express himself.

Metaphysical intuition is not then a synthesis, nor is it a generalization of experience; it escapes definition and can only be imaged through such analogies as have already been given.

There is thus always a core of something very positive in any doctrine or system. We have in it, in germ, what may later be developed to extremes in absolutely opposing concepts. But it is in this core that concepts meet and penetrate. Though human intellect always tends to carry each tendency to the extreme, this is not what is fruitful in philosophy; "yes" and "no" are not of much use, but the question should always be "in what measure?" We shall see later that Bergson makes full use of this method himself. Further, since the core from which fruitful ideas are drawn must always express some contact with reality, it must, when taking the form of hypothesis, be positive, it must be an affirmation. It is true, as we have seen, that intuition carries with it the power of negation; certain preëxisting affirmations have to be cast aside as expressing no genuine contact with reality. But the negation itself creates no ideas; it simply judges a previous judgment and has no other content than this judgment. It is, in fact, a provisional thing and implies that another affirmation, whose content is not yet specified, must take the place of the one under discussion.

In experience must be founded any claim to value or reality. Philosophy is not, however, analogous to mathematics, for every thing that a philosopher brings is not equally verified or verifiable. The mind must at certain moments and in certain points accept certain risks; but such risks are only taken because there *are* things of which the philosopher feels unshakably certain, and so there are degrees in metaphysical certainty. He makes others certain in their turn in the measure in which he can communicate to them the intuition from which he has drawn his force. Any general affirmation, of course, however close to the facts, is a theory, but theories differ in their nearness to experience. Philosophy should be satisfied with a sufficiently high degree of probability; this can be continually pushed further until it approaches certainty.

The answer to vital problems cannot be given in a mathematical way; that a fact is of an empirical nature does not always mean that we can verify it at once empirically. But, in many different fields, different lines of facts can be followed. None of these go far enough in themselves, but by opening up all ways many directions are given, at whose points of convergence the answer to the problem would be found. In any case, its region is indicated. Any line of facts followed alone in the direction of its own solution gives a new probability; each additional one adds to the likelihood of this probability, until there is such an accumulation of probabilities as practically amounts to scientific certainty.



A method is needed for philosophy. Bergson thinks that the method he suggests would gradually bring about the agreement of all thinkers in the same perception of things. He believes that, if the intuitions round which the great systems of philosophy have been formed were united by continuous links, a certain well-defined direction of thought would be found. Hitherto advance has been very slow, for each thinker has been obliged to start all over again by himself. If there were a method of philosophy, each could add something through earnest work, as in the case of the sciences. Philosophy would in this way become a collective and progressive enterprise instead of a number of rigid systems which must be taken or left along with the final answer they give to vital problems. Philosophy and, first and foremost, the answers to these great problems will be of a tentative, perfectible character. Based on accumulations of probabilities, they will admit of endless retouchings. Philosophy will be broad and open to all; capable of indefinite, straightforward progress. Previous contradictions will be swallowed up in the broadening vision of things. The particular step at present necessary is the breaking of the bonds placed on the mind by mathematical categories; philosophy must take a larger basis, one including the facts of biology, psychology and sociology. Opinions will prove themselves more and more completely in an empirical manner, correcting one another. Metaphysics will always give the provisional results to which it has been led by its study of reality until, Bergson hopes, philosophers will be led to agree more and more in contact with one and the same experience.

Philosophy and science are now far from being at unity one with the other, but Bergson hopes that unity may result when each deals with its respective sphere, one of the two types of experience. Each type of experience leads to knowledge; but in the first, superficial form of experience—things as they conform to our action on them—consciousness externalizes itself, while in the second it reënters and reseizes itself and its object. Philosophy and science will meet in intuitions. Science will then turn at once to the practical and more superficial side of experience and to analysis, in order to find a mode of expression conformable to our usual habits of thought. The intuition from which the work of analysis sprang is instantaneous, while the latter may last for centuries. Metaphysics will hold sway so far as fundamental experience is concerned. As it does not aim at practical application, it should often abstain from changing into symbols, for it is only really itself when going beyond concepts. Through thus losing in strictness it gains in bearing and extension.

The logical apparatus of science is often taken as being all that science is, the intuition from which it sprang being forgotten. What is said as to the relativity of science is due to this cause and also to the fact that we often come to regard its schematic

reconstructions of the realities of fundamental experience as these realities themselves, and thus confuse intuition and analysis. A really intuitive philosophy would result in reestablishing an experienced, lived continuity between the different intuitions which the sciences have now and then obtained of various realities and which do not always dovetail with one another, and union would thus be accomplished. The different sciences would have their root in metaphysics, and metaphysics would become as progressive and indefinitely perfectible as science. Although it is impossible for the philosopher of today to master all the data of positive science, he must be in a position where none of these data are beyond him when he has need of them. This does not at all mean that the sciences should be mastered in order to be led to a higher degree of abstract generalization; all that is thus obtained is a hypothetical unification of knowledge. True philosophy does not reach a constructed unity; it must in each case start from the unity of intuition. We have already seen how, through fusing together enormous masses of details and observations from different and opposing points of view, there is a greater likelihood of prejudices and preconceived ideas neutralizing each other and of the mind being placed in a position to seize a glimpse of reality. An idea pretending to be of intuitive origin, which cannot, in dividing and subdividing, cover the observed facts and the laws whereby science relates them, is pure fancy. A live intuition must, in its scattering of itself, be capable of exact application to such facts and laws.

A continual going back and forth between the mind and nature is thus necessary, and a constant remodelling of our concepts on facts. There is here no reaction against positive science, Bergson says; and, if this is what is meant by being mystical, the term cannot be applied to him. All true philosophy, however, is mystical in the sense that it should appeal to the internal and deepest life of things. The object of philosophy would be attained if intuition could be sustained, broadened and assured of points of external reference. Philosophy, as penetrating into becoming in general, should thus be the true prolongation of science, as a body of established and demonstrated facts.

But philosophy may also become complementary to science in everyday life. It must examine life without thought of practical utility. Freed so far as possible from the obstacles to fuller perception, we must strive to see. The first step in this direction is the intuition of duration; to see things *sub specie durationis*, to see reality as continuous and indivisible, this is already to be a philosopher. The world into which senses and consciousness introduce us is only a shadow of itself, and even our consciousness of ourselves is phantasmal as compared with what such effort would reveal. As we plunge ourselves into the flux of reality, our ordinary sensations become artistic ones. The satis-

faction given by art only now and then and to the few, should be given by philosophy to all men at all times. It should be a research in the same direction as art, but taking as its object life in general.

But philosophy is even more than this. It should be an attempt to fuse oneself again with the whole, and should end by broadening the human nature in us and by making it transcend itself. Through it, all things acquire depth; present and past are found to be fused in such a way that our former perceptions remain continuous with the present and in the latter the future is seen to be already forming. Our clear-cut, static perceptions of the world around us and of ourselves will be revived and put in motion until we feel all things borne by the same mighty impulse. We shall sympathize with nature and treat her as a comrade, feeling in ourselves the forces that work in all things.

Science can give us well-being or at most pleasure, but philosophy, as a new vision and a participation in the very generation of things, would give us joy.<sup>1</sup>

So far, all that has been attempted is an account of the fundamentals of Bergson's philosophy. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of those aspects of his thought and method, which are not fully developed by him, but which are of importance to our subject.

#### ART AND PHILOSOPHY.<sup>2</sup>

Bergson again and again refers to the artist and the aesthetic faculty in man as an example of an extension of our faculties. The artist has a fuller perception than ordinary men, and it is his function to make the latter perceive more fully in their turn. It is to be wished that Bergson had dealt more fully with the relation between art and philosophy; but we can here gather the substance of what he has said on art and the artist in his various works, and see what can be inferred from this.

We perceive with reference to our needs; that is, it is the useful impression to which we may react appropriately that reaches us clearly, all others being obscured for us or only perceived confusedly. The senses and consciousness give us, in this way, a practical simplification of reality. Useless differences are eliminated and useful resemblances accentuated. The individuality of things escapes us whenever it is not materially useful to perceive

<sup>1</sup>The distinction between pleasure and joy is important and will be dealt with later.

<sup>2</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: *Donn. imméd.*, pp. 9-14, 101; *Le rire*, pp. 21-28, 139, 158-175; *L'Evol. créat.*, p. 192; *Percep. du chang.*, pp. 9-13, 36.

it; and, even when we do take note of individuality, we do so just by one or two signs that are of use to our practical knowledge. We read the "labels" of things, as it were, and do not notice the things themselves.<sup>1</sup> This tendency has been strengthened by language, which classifies according to what profit may be drawn. We perceive even ourselves but superficially, seeing only the external manifestation of our real states and emotions. We see the impersonal aspect of our feelings, that aspect which language has noted, once for all, as nearly the same for all men under the same conditions. We thus move among symbols and shadows, and reality does not directly strike our senses and consciousness. If it did, we should all be artists. For the artist, Bergson holds, is he for whom the thick veil of superficial useful experience is thin or even, here and there, transparent. For man, who has attained his position in the world through his success in struggling against the material environment, it is natural that the simplified aspect of things should be all-important. Art, like speculation, is for him a mere luxury. Still, there are born those who are less attached to this material side of life. Such a man perceives things in themselves and not for himself; he perceives in order to perceive, and, because he does not aim at using his perceptions, he perceives more. His perception is purer in that he breaks with useful conventions. He is less attached to life, and his faculty of perception is not so bound up with his faculty of action.<sup>2</sup>

The artist thus has a more immediate vision of reality and is in more direct contact with it. There is, in him, a disinterestedness innate in the structure of the senses and consciousness. But his detachment is never complete. If it were, all things would be immediately perceived; there would be a direct vision of reality. Even in artists, however, it is only in some one direction that perception is less attached to need. It is by one of the senses, or in some direction of his consciousness, that the artist has vision, and this is the origin of the diversity of the arts. The painter and the sculptor see the internal life of things appear through color and form; they try to place themselves at the heart of their object by an effort of sympathy which lowers the barriers space interposes between them and their models. The artist remains closer to his origin, the common origin and life of all things. Indeed, the artistic imagination, according to Bergson, is the capacity for following out the tendencies that exist in a merely virtual state in nature. For instance, a caricaturist sees possibilities of deformities and distortions which some better force has driven back and which have not become actualities. By exaggeration, he makes such tendencies manifest.

<sup>1</sup>Le rire, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>By "life" Bergson usually means organic physiological life. Cf. Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, p. 62.



But this becomes clearer still with the artists who turn rather to themselves, with dramatists and poets when they speak of the experience of men. Bergson goes so far as to say that observation of others is not necessary to the real poet. Even if he has seen all he describes, this is not what is most useful to him, for he could then perceive but externally and interpret by analogy with his own experience. Such interpretation is always defective, and no real character is recomposed from bits gathered here and there. What is essential to him is his own fundamental experience. Of course, the poet has not *been* all the persons he describes, but the point is that he might have developed into each one of them. Character, as we shall see more fully later, is a ceaseless choice. The poet must have had in him the potentiality, the tendency, to become each one of the persons he has described. Poetic imagination consists in following to its end every path he himself might have traversed. The poet is capable of such a fundamental vision of himself that he can seize the virtual in the real, and actualize, in his works, those tendencies which, in reality, remained as mere potentialities. The tragic poet or dramatist seeks to unveil to us those most intense and violent states of soul born of the contact of man with man.<sup>1</sup> He discovers for us a hidden part of our nature, a part that is discouraged by the conventions of social life—the tragic element in our personality. Some artists go even deeper than the deepest feelings and reach something which is a direction or movement of their life; this they can no longer express in words. They are the musicians.

Artistic vision leads to creation; it is, indeed, almost one with it. The artist, in coinciding for a moment with reality, is driven to express in images something of what he has seen. What he creates is unforeseeable; it is unique and cannot be repeated; it is a work of art.

The aim of art is thus to reveal to us, in nature and in ourselves, things that do not explicitly strike our senses or our consciousness. Every art seeks to cast aside conventions, symbols, generalities, all that masks reality from us, and to make us see.

But how do we see any more, in a work of art, than we usually do of the reality which it seeks to reveal to us? The general method of art is to impress, to suggest, rather than to express. It

<sup>1</sup>In another connection we shall deal more fully with comedy. Its place, Bergson says, is not quite in the realm of the pure aesthetic and yet, consciously, its aim is that of giving a spectacle to man just as art does. Unconsciously, however, the laughter provoked by the ridiculous has a corrective aim, and is therefore not quite disinterested, as art should be. Its mixed character manifests itself in that it moves among generalities and types and is born of external observation. It does not reveal the fundamental nature of things, as do the arts proper, but reveals more clearly to man the social conventions and superficialities that stifle the deeper realities.

seeks to lull our resisting tendencies and to lead us to a state of obedience, where a suggested idea is at once realized and a suggested feeling sympathized with. That is, its aim is, in a sense, to hypnotize us.

In a work of art, the artist tries to arrange the external manifestation of his vision in such a way that he induces us to catch a glimpse of a similar vision ourselves. Whatever the feeling or thought may be, it takes on aesthetic character in so far as it is thus suggested rather than directly stimulated.

It must be remembered that we never see, or feel, or think, just the same as the artist; still, his purpose is to make us recognize his work as true so that it should reveal something to us and should cause us to disclose more of our own fundamental experience to ourselves. Art individualizes things; the vision of the artist cannot be repeated, so when his work of art is universally accepted as true, this does not mean that everyone has experienced the same vision. Generalities and repetitions, as we have many times seen, belong to the region of our superficial utilitarian experience. The work of genius is born of such sincere effort to see that its very sincerity is communicative. The truth of such a work is its power to induce us to make an effort, in our turn, to see sincerely. We are encouraged by a great work of art to cast aside what screens from us the deeper reality of the world around us and our own more fundamental experience. We experience more deeply; we have our own vision—not that of the artist, but a similar one, though doubtless not one of such intensity or fullness.

The work of art itself is a shadow, but it is a shadow arranged in such a way that we can, as it were, see the character of the object casting it. It is in the realm of our superficial experience, but, in it, is suggested to us a more fundamental experience, both of ourselves and of nature.

As to nature herself, Bergson says, her beauty is open to question, except in so far as we meet in her some of the procedures of art. That is, except in so far as nature is suggestive to us of a more fundamental vision beneath our usual perception. Art, however, has the greater power of suggestion; it uses many artifices which nature cannot have at her disposal, and does not imitate nature if it can find any better means of suggestion. Nature, for instance, has not rhythm, although she does present us with beings of such proportions that their harmony has a lulling effect on us. In place of the means of suggestion employed by art, nature has, however, one powerful means of making us sympathize. We are part of nature—her comrades, all being imbued with the same life and having suffered the same influences. Thus, at indications of feeling, a similar feeling is at once suggested to us; we can sympathize.

But, to return, the artist, according to Bergson, is he who, in

some direction, catches a deeper vision of reality. On him reality strikes and impresses itself as beautiful. He is, in his turn, a mediator of beauty to the rest of mankind, that is, he seeks to arouse the æsthetic faculty in his fellow men—the capability they have of receiving a vision of beauty suggested to and impressed on them.

What then is the relation between philosophy and art? Or rather between the philosopher and the artist? Let us take the likenesses first. Both the philosopher and the artist start from a vision, an impulse, an intuition. This can only be an internal experience;<sup>1</sup> they are not mere external observers, however careful and accurate. Again, such experience is theirs in that they are disinterested. Vision only comes to those who are not trying to get something out of what they see, and who cast aside, as much as possible, prejudices and usual points of view. Such intuition or vision admits of degrees in the case of both the artist and the philosopher. The genius, whether artist or philosopher, sees more and is in closer touch with reality, but his vision or contact may be of varying degrees of intensity and thus reach corresponding depths of reality.

Both philosopher and artist then proceed to creation. Neither builds up a system or a picture like a mosaic, but, starting from his vision, he tries to create an image or representation of it such that a vision can be communicated to his fellows. He goes from the whole to the parts by a scattering of his vision through the media of communication.

But before considering these media, as they go to form philosophy and art in the two cases under consideration, we must take up the differences in the starting point of their creators, the philosopher and the artist.

Philosophy is not art, and the difference lies not only in the difference in the means of communication, but to some extent also, it seems, in the vision itself. To begin with, the artist has vision without any willed or systematic detachment from the utilitarian, material side of life. Such detachment is, in him, innate and spontaneous; he catches a glimpse here and there and is driven to creation. But the philosopher's detachment is more systematic and is willed and reasoned.

Again, the artist reaches a vision here or there of an individual thing or experience, whereas it should be the aim of philosophy to take life as a whole, rather than some small part, and to start from some intuition of the fundamental reality of things. It follows really from this latter distinction that art gives us but

<sup>1</sup>According to Boutroux, the English word "experience" best expresses this meaning; we experience he says, "if, instead of taking the standpoint of the unmoved external observer, we make trial of (*éprouver*), feel and live in its very being, some form of existence." E. Boutroux. William James, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xviii, p. 723.

momentary glimpses, it does not dilate our present in the way that philosophy does by giving us the vision of all things as having duration. In this respect, some forms of art are more distinct from philosophy than others. Painting and sculpture deal with material reality, and do not reveal it to us as in duration. Poetry, on the other hand, can draw very near to philosophy in giving us the unfolding of an individual's experience and thus leading us to life in general; while music, although its form of expression is so different, yet goes deeper than any of the arts in following some of the currents of reality. On the whole, however, the artist does not go deep, as the philosopher should.

The difference between philosophy and art can be seen from quite another point of view. A work of art is said to be true in so far as it induces us to have a somewhat similar vision for ourselves. Philosophy is genuine in so far as the intuition from which it sprang can, in scattering, cover the facts scientifically studied. The test of truth is a more individual thing in the one case than in the other, although, indeed, so far as an intuition remains vague and does not try to cover the facts, it will only be accepted as true by those who have a similar personal experience.

There are only two media of communication: images and concepts. Now the philosopher must use concepts; only to a very intent study does his thought reveal some image which, in turn, reveals his intuition better than do concepts. Artists have the advantage here; their media are images directly. In painting and sculpture this is obvious. In poetry, it is true, concepts must be used, words and phrases, but then these are arranged so that they immediately suggest some image. Music, also, gives images; signs must be used by those who interpret it, but these signs are only interpreted rightly in the measure in which the performer has an image of the whole melody, and can follow the master from the whole to the parts. Art can thus, in some of its forms at least, make a more immediate and powerful appeal to mankind than philosophy.

Although art induces us to see, in so far as it is a vision of individual things, we can only have similar and not the same visions. Philosophy, Bergson hopes, will end by uniting all philosophers in the vision of one fundamental experience. This must be because it is dealing with life, with what is in all individual experiences in such a way that all can be led to experience the same vision. In this sense, the progressive philosophy Bergson hopes for will not be a work of art; it will be built up gradually, through the intuitions of many, intuitions which can, to some extent, be shared.

That each successive philosophic system has been and is a work of art is more or less true. It is true, that through them, in so far as they are at all vital, some intuition or vision is expressed. But such systems usually attempt direct expression rather than



the suggestion that the artist makes use of, and consequently their success is not so great. In so far, however, as a system has the power of suggesting an image leading to the intuition which is its impulse, it may be called a true work of art. On the whole, not many philosophers seem to have been artists properly so called, although, of course, there have been notable exceptions. Plato, for instance, continually strove for absolute intellectual coherence which he believed must be beautiful, while his poetic visions are really at war with such intellectualism. The great originality of Lucretius, as Bergson himself says, lies in his power of seeing and suggesting the beauty of nature and yet, at the same time, following out to the utmost the bent of his intellect in decomposing and dissecting it.<sup>1</sup>

Most philosophers have, indeed, been so convinced that each philosophic system must be the work of pure intellect, that they would probably be the first to deny any intuitive impulse and would try to drive out suggestions that seemed to them to come from any other source than reason. This following of intellectual proclivities to their extreme limit is, as we have seen, antagonistic to intuition. In the work of analysis, the philosopher, and still more his disciples, have gone furthest from what is vital in the impulse of his thought, and have ended in rigid and opposing systems, depending on the intellectual point of view they started from. Each system claims to be the last intellectual word, and this is where the trouble lies. Only in so far as they are sprung from intuition, even though unconsciously, have they some foundation in reality; only then can they be really compared to works of art.

It cannot be made too clear, however, that, in calling a philosophic system a work of art, it is not meant that it is merely an imaginative representation of things. Genuine philosophy and a genuine work of art are both the product of a contact with a reality deeper than that embodied in our superficial experience. As always, Bergson's distinction between the superficial experience of every-day practical life and experience as more fundamental—as of increasing depths of reality—is at the heart of the matter. We must dwell on this distinction a little further and more explicitly in its relation to art, although it has been implicit in all that has so far been said on the subject.

We have already seen how science and philosophy unite in intuition, but must then separate to follow their respective paths. Even so, philosophy, to be communicable, must use intellect in its self-expression. Just as philosophy is a contact with a deeper reality, while its expression is of necessity in the sphere of more superficial experience, so artistic vision, also a contact with reality, is given expression by the artist in the more superficial realm

<sup>1</sup>*Extraits de Lucrèce* . . . , p. xx.

of experience in his work of art. So far, this is a mere repetition of what has been said. But let us see a little more fully how æsthetic experience is related to the ordinary progress of superficial experience. In so doing, we shall grasp the distinction between artistic vision and æsthetic appreciation.

Now, in our ordinary practical experience, there is the constant interaction between conditions and their outcome; between our needs and the possibilities that present themselves to us, and direct the remoulding of the given conditions at any moment. Such experiences involve a certain element either of satisfaction or of dissatisfaction. If the satisfaction is at its maximum, our attention is turned from the distinction between the actual and the possible, and centers in the immediacy of the pleasure we experience. The satisfaction is, however, of some need. Pleasure lies in this, and primarily has to do with the preservation and propagation of organic life. Bergson makes a distinction between pleasure and joy; for joy, he thinks, is not rooted, as is pleasure, in the more material, practical side of things, but is a sign of creation.<sup>1</sup> In so far as we create, that is, coincide with a direction of reality, we have joy. Artistic vision is such coincidence and thus leads to creation and gives joy. But æsthetic appreciation may be very shallow, simply pleasure in the satisfying quality of the felt harmony or other sensations induced by the work of art. On the other hand, æsthetic appreciation admits of all depths tending finally to coincide with artistic vision itself in following some direction of creative reality. At this limit and in the measure in which it approaches artistic vision, it, too, will give joy; on the other hand, as it draws nearer to being merely superficial experience, it is pleasure that is felt.

Not only does the artist perceive the many things that are superfluous in our ordinary experiences, but, at the same time, the closer his contact with reality, the more does he feel the endless possibilities ahead. For creative reality must always be rich in future possibilities only one of which will in time be actualized. He sees thus, because he is detached from practical life and can go deeper. The deeper an æsthetic experience, the more is it freed from the machinery of our practical life and the further is it from the realm of superficial experience. Of course, this superficial experience has been utilized by the artist to express and suggest his vision; his technique lies in his ability to do this with the utmost skill. But were the technique of an artist of the highest order, if he had no vision, he would reveal nothing to us.

Intellect, the guide of our superficial experience, certainly enters into the technique of the artist. He uses artifices, as we have seen, to secure some suggestion of his vision to others. It

<sup>1</sup>Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, p. 42.

is through order and arrangement that some arts make their appeal, though the order and arrangement are only felt as beautiful in so far as, through them, an underlying reality is suggested. The suggestion which is the function of art must not be taken in too intellectual a sense here, for then, again, the æsthetic would belong only to the sphere of practical, superficial experience. Is it true that, in the course of practical life, things, if they are to mean anything to us, must suggest possibilities, so that intellect may guide our action. But such suggestion is all at one level; it is all a part of superficial experience. The suggestion used by the artist has, as its object, the setting us free from the conventions and symbolism of this form of experience and plunging us deeper into fuller and more real experience. To make this quite clear an example may be given.

In listening to music, the notes may be taken simply as the signs of the structure of the piece; they may be treated as suggestive from the intellectual point of view. In so far as there is a fuller appreciation of the music, however, and in so far as it is felt to be beautiful, the sounds have carried us beyond this superficial region and have suggested an underlying reality. The two forms of suggestion may be and generally are present together in varying degrees.

We have seen how artistic vision must thus use superficial experience to produce the work of art. Again, the effect of the work of art is not free from results in this same realm of experience. Of course, in so far as æsthetic appreciation has real vision in it, the result of the work of art is not only in this superficial plane—indeed, the power of vision of the observer is thereby increased. But, at the same time, we cannot suppose that its effects are not shown in our ordinary life as well. One effect naturally is that an æsthetic experience, as giving us either pleasure, or joy, or both, is something we come consciously to desire. We try to bring about occasions of securing it and intensifying it. It may be that, to secure the power of vision, intellect may be used to put one into the right position, just as the intellect must be used to put one into the place to make an effort at intuition. Artistic vision is, however, more spontaneous than intuition which is at the basis of philosophy. But one and the other are independent in themselves of intellect, although its machinery is used by them. From each springs the impulse to a certain form of creation; it is from them that we must start to understand art and philosophy.

It is, then, artistic vision itself, and not mere æsthetic appreciation, which is the type of experience nearest to the intuition which, Bergson says, must be at the basis of true philosophy. The business of the philosopher and the artist is creation, not vision alone and, least of all, mere appreciation. Indeed, the genuine character of vision may be almost doubted if it does

not give the inspiration to creation in its endeavor to communicate itself.

The eccentricities of artists are proverbial, and this is not surprising since they are less attached than others to the ordinary occupations of life. But there are dangers in their way. Even the vision of the artist is but a glimpse of reality, and he will consciously strive to see more, to multiply and stimulate such visions. To do this, he may intensify in imagination the satisfying aspects of any situation and thus substitute for real vision and creation an artificial appreciation leading him to inactivity. He will become indifferent to evils around him and seek only to intensify his own satisfactions. The less deep his vision, the greater would be such a danger. This may give some clue to what has often been noticed in the character of artists: their lack of deep, enduring sympathy with their fellowmen. In any case, we have seen that the artist's vision is an individual thing. But if, having the power to see and feel, he allows his longing to see and feel to become a selfish craving, he will be led to an intense individualism that becomes impervious to the feelings of others except as they affect himself.

The philosopher, however, though he may be absent-minded, cannot incur this reproach of coldness if he be a genuine philosopher, for his business is with the whole and, if not capable of genuine sympathy, he cannot reach outside himself.

#### THE MEANING OF REALITY.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout all that has been said, reality has been taken as having degrees. Experience of one kind has been treated as superficial, and more fundamental degrees of experience have been constantly spoken of. Artistic vision and still more philosophic intuition have been said to reveal a deeper reality. Now, it may be said that it is begging the question to start by calling one form of experience more fundamental than another; one form of reality deeper than another. What is meant by such a statement, which amounts to saying that a certain type of reality is more real than another; that different realities are arranged

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 49, 59, 62, 63. Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 1-4, 19-25; Notes on the words "immédiat" and "inconnaissable," *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. viii, pp. 333, 341; Remarks as to the part played by the unconscious in mental life, *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. x, pp. 43-45. A propos d'un article de Mr. W. B. Pitkin intitulé James and Bergson, *Jl. of Phil. Psych. and Sc. Methods.*, vol. vii, pp. 385-388; L'Evol. créat., pp. 216-229, 295-323; Percep. du chang., pp. 14-20, 35-36; Life and Consc., *The Hibbert Jl.*, vol. x, pp. 27-32.



in a scale of diminishing or increasing reality? What can the standard be to determine such a scale?

In attempting to answer this question, we shall be able to gather together the substance of this chapter. Often the formulation of what Bergson has said on any topic has been of necessity somewhat provisional, and on hardly any point, even here, can a final formulation be reached. The truth is, that all parts of Bergson's philosophy imply all other parts. In this chapter, we have sought to give what has been called his "center of force," that from which his thought has sprung, and then, in a general way, the results to which he has been led. It will only be in the succeeding chapter, in dealing with the individual and then with life in general and the place of the individual life in it, that a more final statement of any of the problems discussed in this chapter can be reached. In particular, the discussion of perception and memory, of consciousness and matter have been left to the second chapter, and will be only provisionally touched upon here where necessary.

Our starting point was experience; it is the only starting point possible and, until there is some introduction of distinctions within this experience, it is all real; we are "immersed in realities," as Bergson says.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, distinctions may be introduced, but even then experience is all real as experience, only we may come, from some point of view, to consider some experiences as more fundamental than others. The standard of such a distinction cannot be an external one; that is, we cannot go beyond what can be experienced, and, on this basis, introduce distinctions into experience.

In immediate experience, there is evidently much that is superfluous for practical action. It is all real in the sense of existence, but, if the particular utility is absent, only those parts of it that can be of use in obtaining that utility are real for us in the sense of being of importance. In fact, one of the great problems of practical life is to be able to be unconscious of much that is in experience; to have the attention fixed on the matter in hand, the conditions and means of its realization. The very essence of attention is, as can be seen etymologically, a stretching forward into the future—a grasping at something. Owing to the necessities of our practical life, we can only attend to, and so be aware of, a very small part of our experience, and that transiently. The rest of experience which is not in the focus of attention is however, all there; it is all operating on what at any moment is explicit.

If attention is turned to a mental state, many states can be analyzed out in it which, by their interference with one another, cause a feeling of obscurity. Much may be discovered explicitly,

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 296.

which before was implicit and unconscious. Bergson's definition of the unconscious in mental life, is, in fact, all that would appear in a conscious state when attention intervenes. He means more here than the ordinary meaning of attention, however. He means an enlarged power that none of us possess, although we can increasingly get something of it.

Bergson's view of attention is but part of his theory of perception and memory and must wait for elucidation till the following chapter. Here it must suffice to say that he distinguishes between the attention to life of the species, that is, the driving force which carries all of us onward and which naturally tends to bring some things only to consciousness, and individual attention which, inside these bounds, is superposed on this attention to life. Abberation from the general attention to life expresses itself in an abnormal and pathological condition, but individual attention, at least in human beings, need not be rigidly tied up with the practical side of life. In other words, we can turn our attention from immediate action and try to see in order to see, and not only in order to act. We can make an effort consciously to live experience and not only to use it. Experience, such as it then appears, is still immediate experience, for immediacy is an extensible term; it cannot mean only that which immediately appears from one point of view, but experience as it immediately appears in any manner of experiencing.

The experience that lent itself to our action was found to be spatial, admitting of measurement and tending to repetition. But, in so far as anything has duration, such an experience of it is superficial, for in duration itself there is no repetition; it cannot be represented spatially or measured. In our consciousness of ourselves, we are within a reality into which we can push deeper and deeper as we more fully experience its duration. The standard of the deepest reality here is that which is most internal to us and is most really ourselves. The deeper reality of a motion of the hand is thus given rather in the muscular sensation immanent in the motion than in the visual perception which is relative to the point of view. But two trains relatively at rest were really moving in themselves. An internal point of view must in this case be imagined to get at the reality of motion. In order to be certain that a change is one, we should have to be within it, as we are within ourselves; but so far as a change is unique, it involves the very relation of past to present and future which is the same thing as undivided duration. As our duration—our consciousness of the becoming of ourselves—is the most real thing in our own experience, in the same way the duration of any other change must be its fundamental reality. But we also tried to show that, if we seek to get at the things in our experience as they are in themselves, the individuality of the objects our practical needs cut out around us would be absorbed in universal

interaction. Change is the most substantial thing there is; in mobility and duration lies the deepest life of all.

Experience is thus not altogether on the surface, nor is its background all just a three-dimensional one. Bergson's view of duration is at the root of his distinction into degrees of more or less real. So far as our practical needs make us perceive only a part of what is there, and this under an aspect in which it may be of use to us, such experience is less real—real in the sense in which we would say we really saw an object if we took off spectacles which cut off a part of it and more or less distorted the rest.

If we start from duration, from mobility, static states and immobility can be deduced; though we never can reconstruct either of the former if we start from the forms of our practical experience. If we are dealing with our experience from our own point of view, the more real may be said to be the most internal—our whole experience, that from which the less real can be deduced; while, in so far as we deal with experience as something that we share in, so to speak, externally, but which has an interior of its own, it is the whole of this interior we mean, the life that it lives. The terms external and internal must, for the present, be taken in their most ordinary sense, though, later, they will meet with further definition. In taking up, in the next chapter, the subject of perception, the question of the personal appropriation of experience will arise.

Our most powerful practical instrument is the intellect, and it finds the way already prepared for it by our ordinary utilitarian perception. The same impetus which carries forward the power of action on the environment leads to more and more distinct perception and its indirect prolongation through the intellect. We are none of us born into the chaos that pure mobility would be for our practical interests. We come armed with the power of clear-cut perception, and consequently, what we find around us has at least a potential intellectual status. There could be no intellectual knowledge properly so called if things were not perceived from this practical point of view.

It is, thus, from what we have all along called the superficial form of experience that intellectual knowledge must take its start. From the intellectual point of view itself—the point of view of the knowing process—we may, in a different sense, talk of one thing being more real than another, and we shall soon take up this meaning of the term; but here we are still dealing with the standard of degrees of reality that has just been indicated. Now, it is at once obvious that, starting from superficial experience, the highest degree of reality any intellectual concept can reach does not exceed that of this superficial practical experience. The further concepts are removed from their origin, the more do they become the merest symbols; at their best, they

are like instantaneous and motionless views of a moving reality. Consciousness thus externalizes itself in the measure in which it perceives things external to one another. But to get at mobility and duration it re-enters, reseizes and goes deep into itself and, in so doing, it penetrates further into what is more internal and thus more real in life in general.

Clear-cut perception was found to prepare the way for the advance of intellect and now it is the deeper form of perception, the vision where reality appears as continuous, that not only leads to but is intuition. In trying to get the fuller perception of ourselves and later of all things as in duration, we were already making an effort at intuition. Intuition of anything is coincidence through an effort of sympathy with what is unique and inexpressible in that thing. The standard of reality of intuition is then simply its greater depth of penetration into the heart of its object. This depth may be estimated in another way by the impulse imparted by intuition to him who possesses it. This manifests itself in the subsequent effort at expression in the forms of practical and communicable experience.

All through, Bergson is not demanding recourse to any new faculty, nor is he seeking realities in a totally different realm from those of our practical life. He simply asks that, so far as this life is at best a practical simplification and elsewhere a mere system of symbols, we should try to get at what it is a simplification of, and for what those symbols stand. He has shown that this is the fact of the immediate internal nature of motion, change and duration. This is his starting point. So far as, and in the degree that, these are grasped, so is reality.

But it is time that the ambiguity in the use of the word consciousness should be dealt with, at least provisionally. Obviously, when Bergson speaks of consciousness, he does not mean simply awareness, although of course the word is used also in this sense. Throughout the whole of the next chapter, in fact, we shall progressively try to get nearer to another meaning, one which for the understanding of Bergson's thought is an all-important meaning. For the present, we must anticipate a little on the results of the next chapter.

Our deepest consciousness of ourselves is our duration. This gives the clue to the meaning of the word. It is one of those basic, most real things which we cannot define, but which we all in some measure experience. Its most striking characteristic is that it involves memory. If we retained nothing of the past, we should not be conscious. Consciousness accumulates the past in the present, but it is continually turned to the future, anticipating it. Duration, in fact, is the "stuff" of consciousness. Duration we saw to be at the basis of things; it is the existence of a life-force which Bergson takes to be consciousness, or at least something of the same nature as that which we reach when most



deeply conscious of ourselves. In going deep into ourselves we seize the force which is in all things, and our own tension of duration puts us in contact with all other degrees of duration. We can see the possibility of a limit of mere homogeneous repetition where consciousness would no longer be; and of another limit of enormously concentrated tension of duration in which our duration would be as the vibrations of ether are in a ray of light.

To make a little clearer Bergson's meaning when he speaks of degrees of tension, let us briefly state the result of his discussion of the intensity of mental states.<sup>1</sup> The intensity of our superficial states, Bergson finds, is a certain quality which informs us through our acquired experience of the approximate magnitude of the cause of our sensations. Deeper down in our experience, on the other hand, we have feelings that seem more or less self-sufficient. They seem, at least, not in any rigid connection with an external cause; although, of course, all have physical symptoms which count for something in the evaluation of their intensity. The deeper a feeling, too, the rarer it is in our utilitarian life. The perception of intensity in these states, however, is found to reside in the confused perception of a felt multiplicity of elements into which such a state could be analyzed. Now, when Bergson speaks of degrees of tension of consciousness, it is such qualitative intensity that he refers to. He is often forced, he says, to use geometrical terms, but "degrees" must not be taken at all in a mathematical sense; these degrees are not measurable magnitudes.<sup>2</sup> The higher degrees of tension differ qualitatively from the lower in enclosing a greater number of more closely interpenetrating elements. In fact, any change in intensity of a state, simple or complex, is one of quality. This is true even of such a complex state as our consciousness of muscular effort, and this, more than any other, might seem to be a growth of quantity, although its intensity does not absolutely depend on an external cause. It is true, too, of the states which do depend on such causes and of those intermediate between our deeper feelings and our superficial efforts.

Now, in our own moments of intensest consciousness, we are creating something. We are determining our future, not being merely pushed or swept along. Consciousness, as awareness, just means what aspect of itself or of its environment becomes as it were illuminated for it. Consciousness becomes aware when it is active and, so far as our activity is mainly that of the practical life, our usual awareness leaves out very much of what we are capable of becoming conscious of. This is more particularly true with regard to our mental life. Consciousness has degrees of different depth. In the measure in which it reaches a fuller

<sup>1</sup>Donn. imméd., pp. 5-55.

<sup>2</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, p. 61.

self-possession of itself the deeper is intuition. The difficulty inherent in the intuitive method appears most striking when it is seen that awareness, as it becomes clear, involves an increased doubling of consciousness into observer and observed. The necessity for endless new efforts of intuition appears even more forcibly from this point of view.

Consciousness is treated by Bergson as an efficacious creative force, incessantly struggling with what we may, for the present, call inertia; it is action continually creating and multiplying itself, but with the tendency to unmake and wear itself out. In this process of perpetual becoming and making and unmaking, the world and organic life have arisen. Life and consciousness are what is most positive in reality, but the very tendency of life to inertia has created matter and hence the environment which it is always the first necessity of life to overcome. In intellect consciousness has best adapted itself to this task and so here too something is genuinely seized by consciousness. Intellect seizes reality, though a less positive reality than that given by intuition.

We have just spoken of an ambiguity in the term consciousness. There is also one in the term knowledge. Knowledge can be taken in the first place in the sense of possession and in the second in the sense of a process. Let us first deal with knowledge in so far as it means possession of its object. It is in this sense that it is most important in connection with Bergson's distinction into degrees of greater and less reality.

If knowledge is taken in this sense, instinct is a highly perfected type of knowledge. Instinct gives perfect adaptation to a particular object, the assured possession of such an object. But it is riveted to certain objects and does not go beyond these. Intuition we have seen to be of the same nature as instinct, in the sense of being a possession of its object, but it has gained much from intellect. For intellect, with its power of extension to an indefinite number of objects has loosened knowledge in the sense of possession from being riveted only to a few particular objects. Through intellect we can place ourselves in the position to make the effort at intuitive knowledge of any object. Now, the intenser the intuition, the more do life and consciousness take possession of themselves; that is, intuition is more or less complete coincidence with a current or direction of the struggle of the life-force. The act of knowledge here coincides with the generative act of reality; it takes no retrospective view on facts already accomplished. Although this is absolute knowledge, it is a limited knowledge, for our physiological life inevitably limits the life of consciousness. In intuition, a part of reality is absolutely seized, but this part goes beyond itself, in the sense that it can be indefinitely enlarged. As we have seen throughout, the "stuff" that is the basis of all things is also in us. Our knowledge of reality would only be relative, if

the nature of life and consciousness were altered by being those of a certain personality, if they thus became of a different essence from the life and consciousness of all things. Through greater and greater effort at intuition, more and more of absolute reality should be revealed; it is not transcendent to our ordinary life; it is in it, though limited by it. Intuitive knowledge, placing itself in mobility and in duration seizes the very life of things. It must also be remembered, however, that this possession admits of degrees of intensity as well as of more or less extension.

What, though, of the intellect? To what extent does it give knowledge in the sense of possession? The same process has cut out matter and intellect; intellect has been fashioned in action on and the reaction of the material environment. So far, then, as it is dealing with matter, it can gain adequate possession of its object. The reality which it seizes, however positive it may seem to it, is but a diminution, a suppression of the positive reality of the creative life-force. The knowledge of matter that can be reached by intellect is thus not relative, and at the same time it is not a knowledge of what is deepest and most positive in reality; it is knowledge of reality, not as it springs forth in its incessant creation, but of reality unmaking itself. This reality intellectual concepts almost seize; but if intellect then tries to turn to the positive reality of life and consciousness, and to apply its categories to or reconstruct them with what are necessarily external points of view, it obtains a mere symbol. This is very useful practically, but gives no real knowledge or possession of its object. The reality of life and consciousness completely escapes the intellect.

But we must now turn to knowledge in the sense of process; it is here that the real task of intellect is found, not so much in revealing reality, but in being the instrument of our most efficacious action.

Man's action is in view of a future possibility. So far as the present situation is completely satisfying it would not spur him to action, but in so far as it presents any elements of incompleteness and confusion, he desires something. This something is suggested by his past experience. It is not absolute lack, but is lack of something, and the present situation must be developed to meet his need. The intellect is the instrument man has at his disposal in seeking the outlet from his present stress. Now, in imagining the future possibility, the future is translated into terms of the past; these are taken and projected into the future. The desirable possibility should then be treated as an opportunity to be tried, the conditions and test of this experiment being the given situation. Each particular situation has its particular desirable development.

and the problem is to find this. This particularity cannot, of course, be complete; it must be within limits. Each situation is not absolutely detached from the life process, and the superficial practical realm of experience, in which most such action moves, is after all a surface manifestation of a direction of life. This is the point at which intuition may intervene in knowing as a process. The particular discovery of the desirable in some situation may be made within the limits of some direction of life given only in intuition. Such intuition is, of course, knowledge in the sense of possession; it is, as it were, the background to the problem, to knowing in the sense of process. When the uncertainty of the particular situation is located and a judgment can be formed—an hypothesis on which action can directly or indirectly be tried, the background to this is given in intuition. We say here "indirectly," for after all, scientific knowing is just a more indirect way of maintaining the life interests. Its hypotheses coördinate as large a number of facts as possible, with the aim of being able the better to act, to draw profit. Since this is so, scientific knowledge is, for the most part, knowledge in the sense of process. Any science must take up endless particular problems and gradually build up a body of established facts and laws. The laws of a science are hypotheses, and, into these hypotheses, more or less knowledge, in the sense of possession, may enter. From what has been said before as to intellectual and scientific method, it is plain that science gets its hold on the reality of things in that realm of experience which best enters the categories of intellect. Our action on matter is very real and it is matter that lends itself to the methods of science. Physics and chemistry, though they are perforce relative to the order of their problems, reach far into the reality of matter.

But scientific method aims at embracing all things, not only matter, but duration, life and consciousness. This, for purposes of action, gives a certain hold, but such knowledge becomes more and more symbolic and relative as it advances. On their physico-chemical side, the problems of life and consciousness lend themselves to science, but the knowledge of life that is thus attained needs completion by methods other than those of positive science or intellect. Metaphysics must complement science; its very cause is to attack the problems of life, and, to do this, it must start with the intuition of duration. It is most truly itself only in intuition. Philosophy, starting with the possession of its object, must not, however, remain vague, but must come into touch with scientific facts. It must, to some extent, use concepts, though these should be as fluid as possible, and here intellect is once more used in the process of scientific knowing. In the immediate guidance of the particular affairs of life the intellect must be used, but the



background for this guidance must be furnished by intuition, unless all our life is to move in the superficial realm of practical experience without any glimpse of the more fundamental degrees of reality beneath this.

Science and philosophy have not the same work to perform; nor is the difference between them merely in the nature of their problems. Philosophy must start with a criticism of knowledge; it will thus be able to show the origin of concepts and categories and the hold on different types of reality possessed by intuitive and logical methods. For, if it starts with the facts as given by science, any attempt at genuine empiricism is but a pretense; such false empiricism takes account only of superficial experience and leaves out the deeper reality from which this is derived.

On the other hand, of course, science must beware of taking its concepts from philosophy except in so far as this is genuine philosophy based on a real intuition of duration, a coincidence with the life of things. In this sense, philosophy must furnish the background, the soil into which the various sciences plunge their roots.

The deepest life of all things is duration; this can only be reached through philosophy—in intuition which admits of all degrees of intensity and which reaches all depths of reality. But life is also unmaking and scattering itself; and we have matter whose order and complication can be traced more and more clearly by the intellect. Science reaches close to the absolute nature of its object, for, even if life is still vibrating in matter, it is all but dormant and atrophied; science, then, reaches reality, but that reality which is a suppression of the positive, deepest reality which is duration.

In the study of life and consciousness, then, philosophy must, through intuition of their reality, directly furnish the hypotheses of science, which must then proceed to apply them as closely as possible. In the study of matter, science can itself reach reality, but it is due to philosophy that this type of reality can be shown to be a diminution of the deepest reality of the life that is in things.

So far, reality has been spoken of from the point of view of adequate possession of an object, but the word "real" is also used as opposed to "apparent" in the knowing process. In order to be clear as to the different meanings of the term reality, we must take up this contrast between the real and the apparent that arises from the point of view of the intellect, that is, from that of practical experience.

Now, from the point of view of the control of this experience through the knowing process, immediate experience is apparent: it is what is there merely to be used as meaning something. The something that is indicated is the reality of what first appeared.

To treat some quality of experience as a sign of something to be reached through reflection is to treat experience cognitively. The distinction here between "more" and "less" real is that between the results of different stages of the thought process. To treat experience practically comes usually to the same thing, although cases might be imagined where experience is treated as a means to something else without any thought being involved. In such a case what would be obtained is the reality of that quality of experience which is the means. But so far as experience is treated simply with respect to immediacy of quality, such treatment must not be confined to the realm of practical experience. In mere satisfaction we are no doubt still in this same realm. But since attention is not here on the interaction between the actual and the possible, on something as the means or sign of something else, it would not seem that the same distinction between apparent and real could be made, as has been above within the realm of superficial experience. This is the more probable, as in immediacy all is real, although not in the sense in which reality has just been used.

Anything is real that enters experience; in that it is, it is operative. But the point that has been made all through as the fundamental one for the understanding of Bergson is that immediate experience is *tensional*. Within itself it admits of degrees of tension, consequently of depths. The superficial experience, which at first appears as all that is operative in our practical life, has been shown at best to give us some aspect of a part of the whole and, at worst, to be simply a static reconstruction, for practical purposes, of the dynamic whole. Reality here goes beyond the less real, not in being what is meant by a sign, but as being the whole from which the less real is extracted, or the whole of which a symbol is made for practical purposes. The deepest reality of anything is, once more, the deepest, most internal life of that thing: it is its duration. We saw that it is within this sphere of immediacy that the reality reached by artistic vision and by intuition is found.

The æsthetic or the philosophic reality of any quality of superficial experience cannot be found in the same realm of experience, but will be increasingly penetrated by going deeper into what this experience is a symbol or aspect of.

There are thus two scales, as it were, of reality. Reality may be greater or less, all within the realm of superficial experience, different stages of a specific process of thought. But there is also a scale of degrees of reality independent of any such process and within the sphere of immediacy. This scale is of degrees of coincidence with the inner life of a thing. There is no attempt in Bergson's works to bring together these two types of reality, but, for him, one is more really real

than another, and the meaning of such a comparison is clear. It is made frankly from the standpoint of immediacy and may be stated thus. Given the scale of realities in superficial experience, we are enclosed in this experience. An hypothesis is true if it helps us to get some hold on this experience. Beyond this we cannot get. But if we start from even a little beyond and beneath practical experience, by penetrating a little deeper into the life of a thing, we see that this superficial experience is not all; it is a simplification of something more fundamental.

Further, it can then often be seen why some hypothesis used to control practical experience is of more efficacy than another. It is not only true in a pragmatic sense but it also, to some extent, has its roots in the deeper life of things, and so the former type of reality is derived from the latter. The life process includes the cognitive process, and any reality that is attained in the latter must, in some way, owe its status to what is real in the former.

#### ETHICS.

On the subject of ethics, Bergson has so far, in his writings, had practically nothing to say. It is reported, however, that he is studying ethics and that he considers the main problem of ethics to be the discovery of a philosophic method whereby what is involved in "duty" may be determined.<sup>1</sup> It is true that to attack each new subject, exhaustive study and a new effort are necessary; but has Bergson's general philosophical method and view of life no bearing on ethics? Even if the special problems of ethics could not be reached from the point of view of his general method, still there is at least the very fact of moral experience to be accounted for. Again, some of the principal forms of such experience must have light thrown upon them from Bergson's philosophy. Ethics cannot be completely separated from philosophy. Bergson himself criticizes another author, Belot, on this very ground. He says: "All philosophy pretends to comprise the totality of the given and thus the practical and moral given, and thereby raises itself to some principle whence it redescends to the given in order to understand it better and even, in that which concerns the practical and moral given, to rectify their direction."<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen, Bergson holds that the very cause of the existence of philosophy should be the vital questions, those

<sup>1</sup>*New York Times*, March 10, 1912, and Feb. 22, 1914.

<sup>2</sup>Diss. de Pen., *Mém. de l'acad. des sci. mor. et pol.*, vol. xxvi, pp. 783-784.

of supreme interest to us—those of our origin and our destiny. These should be studied directly. Unquestionably ethics must, on this view, be of essential importance to the philosopher.

Still, almost all that Bergson had to say when once questioned on the subject was that "the normal exercise of human activity will be defined better and better by going deep into life itself."<sup>1</sup> The remainder of his answer will be taken up later, but it is at the best very vague.

It certainly suggests itself, however, that Bergson cannot, at least initially, have been enthusiastically interested in ethics. His personal attitude throughout his writings seems to be a combination of that of the scientist and that of the artist, and, of course, this has had its effect on his philosophy.

From the purely intellectual point of view he is certainly right in saying that he does not care whether his views are consoling or disheartening, only whether they are true.<sup>2</sup> Still the case cannot be quite the same if ethics is to depend on metaphysics, for the latter, as Bergson himself says, acquires much more vital interest in this instance.<sup>3</sup> There is, then, an active personal attitude towards life that seems, at least to a large extent, lacking in Bergson's point of view. So genuine, however, does his vision appear, that this lack seems to have led to no more than the underemphasis on, and sometimes the omission of, points which would seem inevitably implied in his views of life and which, if included, would have been most important for ethical theory.

The fact, too, that Bergson does not aim at giving a complete closed-in system, but rather is suggesting a philosophic method which he himself has applied in reaching his own views, makes it possible for a theory to omit much and yet not be thereby falsified. Philosophy, indeed, as we have seen, will, he hopes, be gradually built up and perfected through the intuitions of many. If, later in this essay, some modifications may seem to have been made, these will be the result of the interpretation of particular points in the light of the whole direction of Bergson's thought.

Bergson's philosophy must of course have ethical implications, although, so far, these have not been followed out. It is true that he says metaphysics should not aim at application; it should examine life without thought of practical utility, striving to reach a vision of reality. There is a danger here. If the aim of the philosopher is to attain disinterested vision and to express this vision to others, there is the possibility of becoming absorbed at all times simply as a spectator, instead

<sup>1</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Sur l'Evol. créat., *Rev. du mois.*, vol. iv, p. 352.

<sup>3</sup>Revue critique; *Principes de métaphysique et de psychologie* par Paul Janet, *Rev. phil.*, vol. xlv, p. 550.



of taking part in any attempt at change, betterment or moral achievement. So far as this is the case, ethics will be ignored. The artist, we saw, was peculiarly liable to this type of danger, though the philosopher could not afford to be over-individualistic, or his vision would be distorted. It will be seen, a little later, that a slight tendency in this direction may have contributed somewhat to Bergson's lack of emphasis on the parts of his thought which are of most importance to ethics.

But, even though philosophy must give vision, this vision is, according to Bergson, a participation in the very generation of things. From such a point of view, it would seem that philosophy and ethics should be peculiarly closely connected.

We are now prepared to briefly suggest the general bearings of Bergson's philosophy on ethics. Such an outline will be of use to us later, when, having considered the facts which are fundamental to ethics, we shall be able to deal more in detail with moral experience.

All men must live, in the sense of attempting to preserve and propagate organic life, and they will be the more successful, the more efficient the use of their minds in the practical control of the environment. But, so long as this is all they do, their deliberations will be rather as to the means to attain their end; the end is not questioned; only, at the most is there doubt as to whether it is expedient in some particular situation. In other cases, however, the value of the end may also be called in question and ends may appear as incompatible; the situation for the individual then becomes a moral one. If he then has a recognition of duty and of responsibility, even if this be only of the narrowest kind, he is still attempting in some way to live well, to fulfil his function in life.

Science is gradually being built up through the efforts of many; and philosophy, Bergson hopes, will ultimately grow in something the same way through the attainment of philosophic method. But even although science and philosophy might thus become open to all, ethics will always occupy a peculiar place in the sense that the continued attempt at right living is held to be obligatory on all. If the pursuit of science or philosophy were to any extent obligatory, they would in so far fall under the head of ethics.

Now, from any objective standard of what is right, a man's acts may be in accordance with this standard without any conscious effort on his part, but so far as an individual consciously acts rightly, he does so in view of some background of belief or conviction. We form our standard of our duty in any particular situation always within the limit of some hypothesis of our duty in general, some method of approach and survey. From such a standpoint, the potentialities of and obstacles in any situation are discovered.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." In accordance with Bergson's method, this hypothesis would involve real vision in the exact measure in which it was intuitive. One far-reaching ethical implication would thus be that conscious moral effort and action must be based on some degree of intuition and that the background of facts scientifically studied and related, the facts of superficial experience, is an inadequate one, from the standpoint of life as a whole. For it will only be through intuition that genuine knowledge of at least a part of this whole can be attained. So far, then, as such action is a furtherance of some direction of the creative life-force it has an intuitive background. It is obvious that these directions of the life-force are not in some transcendent noumenal sphere, but that they must be sought in our own life and experience. They may be cramped and limited here but the experience and knowledge we have of them should not be relative or distorted. Our own standards of value must have their meaning as to some extent expressing the good in the structure of things.

Bergson dwells much, as we have seen, on the need of a comprehensive grasp in order to reach intuition, the necessity of being unbiased in point of view; and nowhere is such an effort more necessary than in the formation of ethical standards. Only so can the directions of the life-principle be seized and thus give us the background to our moral life. This background must thus be furnished by taking, as far as possible, the standpoint of the whole. The principle thus given must certainly be followed throughout, but this will not be at all the same as following to its extreme limit some narrower motive yielded by the intellect. It is here that the danger of going to extremes becomes apparent. Indeed, as Bergson himself says, deduction admits of but slight application in psychology and morals; speedily we must turn to a continued experience of reality to "recurve" what is deduced "along the windings of life."<sup>1</sup>

That the good is found by intuition where there is always revealed a blending of different tendencies recalls Aristotle's definition of virtue as the mean.

Standards must thus be reached through intuition; they are again attested and adhered to in the same way, and increasing agreement should be reached on them in proportion as the intuitive method is recognized.

Although they would be positive and would furnish a direction of action, they would, at the same time, possess the power of casting out ends incompatible with themselves, rather than that of definitely providing ready-made ends for particular

<sup>1</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 232.

situations. The latter could not be their use, for a principle or standard, in the sense here given to this word, is a direction, an impulse, and not a mere rule of action. In fact, as such, it is really incommensurable with the means we have of acting on it. Ceaselessly we must seek to use principles in forming the end of each particular situation that arises. In fact, the attempt to live in the light of such standards and the increased knowledge of them must involve a continuous struggle.

Such a method of discovery of moral principles, thus, in no sense sanctions the mere appreciation and approbation of such principles, without following the direction indicated by them. Nor, again, is a merely negative type of morality enough. It is not sufficient to abstain from what is wrong, from following those ends that are cast out as incompatible. This certainly is necessary, but the conduct which is sanctioned on such a basis is that of active adherence to and working out of the principles grasped.

In this working out, once more, as in all reflection, thought, and deliberation, it is the intellect that must be used. In seizing a principle there is more or less intuition involved, it is more or less fully a direction of the life-force; but, so far as this principle must be applied in every-day life, this can only be through the intellect working always with this intuitive background to interpret the forces operative in any particular situation, and, on their basis, to discover the particular end in view of which action should be directed.

Now, we have seen that the deeper the intuition, the further does it penetrate, approximating coincidence with the direction of the life of its object through what Bergson calls "a kind of intellectual sympathy." It is possible that this term "intellectual" is to some extent misleading, for intuition cannot be confined to some vision of the real leading only to the attempt at verbal expression of such a vision. A vision of truth is interpreted in intellectual terms, and a vision of beauty in the terms of art. But, from the active attitude which seems to be lacking in Bergson, the expression of a vision of the good would rather take the form of attempting to live it. The depth of intuition is attested to by the impulse it imparts to create, and, so far as it has moral bearing, it would not merely scatter itself in intellectual concepts, but would furnish the background or principle in the light of which we should determine how to act in particular cases. Consequences that result in these particular situations are good if they are, to some extent, the carrying out of one of the directions of the life-force. But, just as genuine intuition has to bear the test of covering the facts of science, so when an intuition of the good is followed, unless its consequences are good, or would

be so if not frustrated by some entirely external factor, it cannot lay claim to validity. The question of motives and consequences can only be taken up more fully later; it is in any case evident that the separation between them cannot be clear-cut.

We saw that knowledge of absolute reality is possible, but that it can only come about by a continual swaying of the mind between intuition and its expression in terms of the intellect. The consequent expansion of thought is a mark of genuine intuition. But the deepening and reinforcement of intuition can also be brought about through action. The intuition of the good involves the struggle to reach coincidence with a direction of the life-principle. In each successive effort further knowledge of the good must be gained; "he that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine." Ethics then is no static system discovered once for all. Absolute standards would fully express the direction of creation of the life-force, and they would be impulses and not things. Their discovery, however, at least in their fuller implications and depths of meaning, must be progressive and perfectible. Again, even in so far as these absolute standards are discovered, the continued experimental use of intelligence is needed, in the formation of ends in the particular cases of practical experience. Moral life presents itself as a continually renewed problem and cannot fail to involve incessant growth.

We mentioned that Bergson had something to say in general as to the moral life. This is, in his own words, that "attachment and detachment are the two poles between which morality oscillates; we need not go completely to either extreme."<sup>1</sup> This simply expresses the general bearing on ethics of Bergson's view of tensional experience. Ethics, while to a large extent directly dealing with particulars in a more superficial experience and so using intelligence, yet is, through intuition, rooted in reality. We must attach ourselves to the life of practical action around us, and here we must live well; but to do so necessitates our detachment of ourselves, to some extent, from the superficial—the plunging deeper into reality. Only so can we have vision and act in its light in the conduct of life.

<sup>1</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i. p. 56.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD.

#### PERCEPTION.<sup>1</sup>

STARTING once more from immediate experience, we must begin with the individual as acting, and also, necessarily, with the theater of his activity. What we have given is a world of images, the word images being used in the sense of what is perceived with the senses and unperceived without them. Perception, Bergson says, is not something whose genesis has to be found; we must start with it. But we can seek to discover, to some extent, what it consists in and what its function is.

Now, in this world of images, one image disengages itself at once as different from the others, in that we not only perceive it from without but are conscious of it within through affections. This image is the body.

Again, the living body presents itself as the instrument of action, and it seems to take the initiative whenever we are conscious of its action. In the totality of images, it seems that the new can only be produced through the action of particular images of which the body furnishes the type. We must remember always that the body, including the brain and the vibrations of the cerebral matter, is an image among other images, and consequently we cannot suppose that the body or that particular part of it, the brain, engenders all the other images, causing representation to be born. The part cannot generate the whole.

In general, images seem to influence each other in a determined manner, and, having no choice of action, they do not need to explore their surroundings or to make trial of several possible actions. The body, however, seems to exercise real influence, and, in doing so, to decide between several possible steps; its action is, to this extent, undetermined. These possible steps, however, must be suggested by the advantage which it can draw from the surrounding images, and so it would not seem improbable that the latter should depict, relatively to the body, what the body can gain from them.

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: *Mat. et mém.*, pp. 1-58, 251-262; A brief account of Bergson's theory of perception, *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. v, pp. 94-99; *Donn. imméd.*, pp. 24-29.

All surrounding images vary as a function of the body; their dimensions, form, color and so on, vary in accordance with their position relative to the body. It is as though they reflected the possible action of the body on them, and as though all images, or parts of images on which at any moment the body could act, were illumined for it.

If the centripetal nerves are cut, perception vanishes; what is actually interrupted is the current passing from periphery to periphery, and thus the connection between the solicitation to action and the subsequent possible response. The body no longer has the power to exercise action of a particular kind. Perception, then, must exactly depict the possible actions of the body.

The same images thus enter into two different systems. We have, on the one hand, what Bergson gives as a provisional definition of matter, the totality of images. In positing any part of matter, we thereby posit this world of images, for every material object owes its determinations and its very existence to the place it occupies among all other images. Each image in this totality of images varies for itself and in a way determined by the action of all surrounding images. On the other hand, we have perception—the same images, but this time related to the possible action of a particular image, the body. In this second system, all vary for one, and in the manner in which they reflect the possible action of this image. Neither system can simply be deduced from the other, for neither implies the other. The question is how the same images belong thus in two systems; and Bergson, as usual, reaches his solution from the consideration that we usually perceive in order to act; the function of perception is not to give knowledge, but is preëminently practical.

When there is excitation of the body, there may be either reflex action through the intermediacy of the spinal marrow, or, again, there may be a number of nascent reactions in the form of cerebral vibrations. The rôle of nervous matter is always simply to conduct, analyze, synthesize, or inhibit movement. In the second case, where there is perception, the brain serves to analyze the received movement, opening to it a variety of motor paths, so that it may, in dispersing, sketch all the possible actions contained in it. Or again, the brain conducts the received movement to a chosen organ of reaction. The brain limits itself to receiving the indications of possible actions through the centripetal nerves and transmitting to the motor organ, through the centrifugal nerves, the order to execute such and such an act effectively; it is only concerned with action.

The function of the higher centers is thus merely to transmit and divide movement; they sketch the plurality of pos-

sible actions or organize one of them. The greater the complexity of the nervous system, the more numerous are the motor mechanisms wherewith the received vibration can be put in relation, and thus the greater the number of possible actions that may be sketched. At the same time, the parts of space which are put in relation with these more complex motor mechanisms are the more numerous and further distant. The growing complexity of the nervous system gives it ever increased latitude of action. The richness and range of perception are proportionate to the growing perfection of the nervous system and testify also to the indeterminateness of living beings in their relation to the environment. Perception appears at the moment that a received vibration is not prolonged in necessary reaction: it sketches the virtual action of things on the body and of the body on things.

But before going on, a restriction must be made as to the meaning of the term perception. As a matter of fact, any concrete perception is always impregnated with recollections, but, for purposes of study, Bergson first deals with pure perception, eliminating the part played by memory. Taking perception in this sense, then, it is obvious that the represented image—that is, the image as it takes its place in the system given in perception—is less than the image as present among the totality of images. In the latter system, it must of necessity act by all its points on all points of all other images; it is, indeed, a pathway through which are propagated in all directions the modifications taking place in all things. In so far as images are mechanically united with one another, they are indifferent to one another; they have no need of perception. But, with the presence of a living being, these images, as represented, enter the other system. There is suppression of all parts of them in which the functions of the living being are not interested. The action of images is diminished in so far as they encounter spontaneity of reaction and the resultant diminution is the representation we have of them. The difference between being and being perceived is one of degree and not of kind. Things are perceived when they are reflected against our freedom of action; and so consciousness, in external perception, consists in practical discernment or choice.

Theoretically, matter might be perceived without the nervous system and sense organs, but practically, this would be impossible; for living is acting, and perception expresses the questions asked of our activity. If a nerve is cut, some questions can no longer be asked, while a stable habit, in furnishing a ready answer, makes a question useless. In either of these two cases, perception is diminished.

Perception, then, although indefinite by right, is, in fact,

limited in view of our action, and reduced to the image of that which interests us, depicting the part of indetermination left to the body.<sup>1</sup> The indetermination of the movements of the body, resulting from the structure of the grey matter in the brain, will give the exact measure of the extension of perception; there will be correspondence between the modifications of the nervous system and perception, and it is for this reason that perception seems to be created by the movements in the brain. As a matter of fact, the cerebral state being nascent, reaction just continues perception which depicts virtual action; it is not the cause nor the effect nor the duplicate of perception, but both are functions of the indetermination of will.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that everything happens as though perception were born in the cerebral centers and projected outward; and so the usual theory of perception can, in its details, be retained, but it must be quite differently conceived as a whole. The physiological process Bergson regards, not as the physical equivalent of perception, but as liberating it, giving it the opportunity and occasion actually to appear.<sup>3</sup>

Bergson's theory is strengthened by the fact that our representations start by being impersonal. We are at first placed outside ourselves, the totality of images is given, and it is from this whole that we gradually detach ourselves. It is little by little that the body is adopted as the center, and representations become ours. The mechanism of this is easy to understand, for other images move as we move, but the body remains invariable and so is recognized as a center to which other images are to be related. In this way the idea of internal and external is born and, at first, simply expresses the distinction of the body from other images, the relation of part to whole. If, then, we go from the periphery to the center, as the child does, and as common sense and immediate experience suggest, it is clear how the body comes to be pictured as in the center of perceptions and as the physical basis of a being to which actions must be related. The senses undoubtedly need education, but this is in order that they may coördinate with one another and that motor tendencies may be acquired. We are not in the state of the material object

<sup>1</sup>"By right, if not in fact," is a phrase often used by Bergson. It means that something is within reach, even though not actually grasped. This must frequently be the case, since experience is regarded as having depths which we do not usually fathom.

<sup>2</sup>Psychophysical parallelism is combated from many points of view by Bergson. He seeks to prove that its thesis is self-contradictory (*Le parallélisme psycho-physiologique*, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xii, pp. 895-908); that it is contradicted by the facts (*Mat. et mém.*, chap. II and III); and that its metaphysical origin is easy to trace (*L'Évol. créat.*, ch. IV).

<sup>3</sup>The terms used by Bergson are "déclancher" and "décrocher."



which receives all influences coming from all bodies; we perceive—that is, we have practical discernment, and perception does not give a complete image of the object. It is to fill the intervals created by the discontinuity of the needs of the body that the education of the senses is, in the first instance, necessary. The data of sight and touch are always central, and round them the other perceptions group themselves. It is they which are most manifestly extended and continuous, and it is they which are of the greatest utility to us. Our tactual perceptions are even more important than the visual, and in thinking of an invariable independent object, we always think of it ultimately in terms of touch. We have already seen of what benefit to the human race this particular practical way of looking at things has been. It would also seem probable that, as harm often comes to the living being through direct contact, touch owes some of its importance to the fact that it may prove dangerous. This latter, at least, would seem to be in line with what Bergson has to say on the subject of affection, to which we must now pass.

It is often through insensible degrees that representation becomes intermingled with affection, and there is no perception that cannot become affection and, in particular, pain. Now, in pain we have something that is active and begins at a certain moment. To understand its place the better, we must remember that, with the growing complexity of organisms, there comes division of labor. With the *amœba*, both perception and movement are found in contractility, but in the human organism, for instance, the so-called sensitive fibres simply transmit the stimuli to the central region, where the vibration is propagated to the motor elements. In order to be, as it were, sentinels to watch over the safety of the whole organism, they have renounced the power of individual action. None the less, however, are they exposed to any cause of destruction which menaces the whole organism; and, while the organism can move to escape the danger, they are relatively immobile. When any element is injured, it makes the effort to repulse what is attacking it, and this is pain. The effort, however, is but local, since the element is isolated, and so it is really powerless and inefficacious. It is for this cause that pain is so often disproportionate to the danger run. Pain thus intervenes at the precise moment when the interested part of the organism, instead of just receiving the stimulus, repels it. Pleasure, it would follow, would be the attraction of the interested part. Pain and pleasure thus express the automatic reaction of parts of the body to certain stimulations. It does not seem likely, Bergson thinks, that utilitarian nature should inform us of the past and present which no longer depend on us. Instead of expressing solely what passes in the organ-

ism, it seems more probable that pleasure and pain should also express what is tending to happen there, that they should sketch the involuntary reaction of the organism. If these involuntary reactions are recognized by the sign of pain or pleasure, then this may lead to resistance or acceptance of them and thus to willed reaction to the stimulus.

But although, in some cases, affection is of use in our free action, yet between perception and affection there is really a difference in kind. The living body has been regarded as a center whence is reflected on the surrounding objects the actions these objects exercise on it. This is external perception. But this center is not a mathematical point; it is a body, exposed, as are all bodies, to external causes which menace it with disintegration, or which in some cases are beneficial to it. Not only does it reflect, but it struggles also to repel or to attract. In this struggle, it absorbs some of the action it is exposed to, and this is the source of affection. When there is a distance between our body and the object perceived, action can only be virtual, but, in proportion as the distance decreases, the danger becomes urgent or the promise immediate, and virtual action tends to become real. If the object coincides to some extent with our body, we then perceive our body and real action, and this special perception is affection. The surface of the body is, for this reason, the common limit of the internal and the external, in that it is the only part of extension at once perceived and felt. Perception is without the body, external objects being perceived where they are, and affections are within the body coinciding with its modifications and are felt where they are produced. We may thus say that the totality of images would subsist even if the body vanished, although, in the latter case, our affective sensations would vanish too.

The localization of affection also needs education, for, just as external perceptions are discontinuous and of different classes, so are internal affections. Education must once more fill the gaps. In each affective sensation, there is something that distinguishes it from others and allows it to be attached to some particular datum of perception. Affection thus receives at once a certain extensive determination, for perception is always of a part of extension. In view of action, it is indispensable to attach affection to some particular datum of sight, touch, or muscular sense.

And so, starting with the totality of images where perception is, we adopt the body as a center, led to this, not only by its faculty of acting, but by its capacity of feeling affections, that is, by its sensory-motor power.

The body is thus, among other images, a privileged one; it is perceived not only superficially, but in its depths. It is

accordingly adopted as the center of the universe, the physical basis of personality. We can thus begin to see why the individual must come to be taken, as Bergson has taken him, as the starting point in obtaining a standard of different degrees of reality.

In this theory of affection, the first step has been taken towards reintegrating pure perception in concrete perception. It has been recognized that the body is not a mathematical point, and thus virtual actions are fused with real ones and perception is impregnated with affection. A second correction must be made, when it is recognized that concrete perception is not instantaneous, but always occupies a certain interval of duration, and is thus always full of recollections. Memory and affection are two subjective elements in concrete perception; but pure perception is not subjective; it is in things rather than in us, being something, indeed, of the objects themselves. Nor is pure perception relative; for its relation to things is not that of appearance to reality, but of part to whole, it being cut out by the multiplicity of our needs. Pure perception places us in matter, and matter goes on all sides beyond the representation we have of it. What is given in the immediate intuition of matter is extensiveness, not extension divided into parts, nor on the other hand non-extended sensations. We can the better see, then, how the divisibility of matter relative to our action does not belong to matter itself, but to the space we stretch beneath it.

Perception participates in the extension of matter, and things must, to some extent, participate in the nature of our perception. For, in it, there is a kind of coincidence of subject and object; there is external intuition in which the essence of matter is seized. An increasingly deeper knowledge of matter is thus made possible for, though our perception is only actually in everything perceived, it is virtually in all the perceptible.

We must now pass to the completion and substantiation of Bergson's theory of perception which is afforded by his theory of memory.

#### MEMORY.<sup>1</sup>

One of the chief conclusions to which the study of perception leads is that the brain is an instrument of action and not of representation; the body and the nervous system are the means whereby motion, received in the form of stimuli, is

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Mat. et mém., pp. 58-197, 225-279; Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 33-71; Percep. du chang., pp. 33-36; Le rêve, *Bull. de l'institut psych. international*, vol. i, pp. 103-122; Souv. du pres., *Rev. phil.*, vol. lxvi, pp. 561-593.

transmitted in the form of reflex and voluntary activity. But we saw that, so far as experience goes, the observed details of the mechanism of perception do not give Bergson's view any advantage over the theory making perception have its sufficient and necessary cause in vibrations of the cerebral substance. The study of memory will, however, distinguish these views, for, if the latter theory of perception be true, cerebral vibrations will produce the object even in its absence, and memory can be explained by the brain. But, on the other hand, if the cerebral mechanism conditions recollection in a certain way without assuring its survival, if, in remembered perception, the brain is the instrument of action rather than of representation, it can then be inferred that it plays the same sort of rôle in perception, and functions in view of efficacious action. What Bergson in general tries to do is to show that the cerebral process corresponds only to a very small part of memory, that it is its effect rather than its cause, and that matter is the vehicle only of action. He attempts, as usual, to solve the problem from the point of view of action.

Another most important conclusion, reached in the last section, was that, in pure perception, we have an immediate intuition of the reality of matter outside ourselves. It was parts of things, rather than of ourselves, which consciousness related by the continuous thread of memory. To choose their reaction, living bodies must make appeal to their recollection of similar situations, and indetermination of action thus requires the conservation of past images. Consciousness, which illumines our more or less free actions, is above all memory, or the preservation and accumulation of the past in the present. Consequently, if mind is a reality, it is in memory that it may be experimentally reached. From this point of view, also, the theory of memory will distinguish Bergson's hypothesis from the opposing one, for, if he can show that memory is different in kind from perception, the presumption is in favor of an hypothesis in which perception intuitively seizes external reality and, in so doing, is completely distinct from recollection. For, if perception gives us the essential of matter, memory must, in principle at least, be absolutely independent of matter. In the course of distinguishing the part played by the brain in memory, and so differentiating between perception and memory, Bergson aims also at discovering why memory is connected with the brain.

The problem of memory is thus seen to be of crucial importance; it gives, at the same time, the theoretical consequences and the experimental verification of the theory of perception. In order to be able to grapple with this problem, Bergson, before reaching his conclusions, devoted five years to the study of aphasia.



Now, the past may be preserved in two ways. In the first place, the recollection of any subject-matter that has been committed to memory is a habit and has all the characteristics of a habit. In the process of learning, there has first been disintegration of this subject matter into its component parts, and then these are recomposed. Like a bodily habit, this recollection is contained in a mechanism which, started by the initial stimulus, functions in a closed system of automatic movements, repeated in the same order and occupying the same time. But the recollection of any particular attempt at mastering the subject-matter is remembered in a very different manner. It has a date and cannot be repeated, being a past event in the life of the individual. Such a recollection is only a representation, while the habit we have just been speaking of is an action, and is as much in the present as is, for instance, the habit of walking. Two kinds of memory may thus be distinguished. In the form of memory-images, all the past is there, and again, as the images which have been perceived take a place in memory, the movements continuing these perceptions modify the organism, creating new dispositions to act. As usual, that which is unique and personal, and which cannot be repeated, is of less use to us than the habit, which is constituted by repetition and becomes more and more impersonal in proportion as it becomes fixed. This latter is only true recollection when we remember having acquired it. It is the other form of the preservation of the past which is true memory. By considering the part played by these two factors in the intermediate forms of memory, those usually considered, Bergson reaches his clue to the nature of recollection.

The body is capable of instantaneous recognition in which no explicit recollection intervenes. Such recognition consists in immediate appropriate action. To recognize an object is primarily to know how to use it; that is, a consciousness of an organized motor reaction is at the core of the feeling of familiarity. Recognition is thus acted before being thought. In most cases, however, there is more in recognition than a mere motor phenomenon, for the memory that is our former mental life is only, as it were, awaiting a gap to appear between an impression and its concomitant movement, and to introduce its images. This real memory is constantly inhibited by the active type of recognition. Our actual consciousness reflecting the adaptation of our nervous system to the present situation is turned from all but those useful memory-images which can complete and illuminate that situation and consequently future action. Action in general turns us from the past, but, at the same time, if images of the past can insert themselves in the form of the present attitude, they do so, fusing in actual perception. Mental diseases which affect the

recognition of objects might then be expected to fall into two groups: those in which the bond between perception and its habitual concomitant movements is broken so that perception can provoke only diffuse tentative movements, and those in which the images of the past can no longer be evoked. The facts, Bergson found, verified his expectation.

We are thus brought from automatic recognition, accomplished almost entirely through motion, to recognition which requires the regular intervention of memory-images, that is, to attentive recognition. This, too, begins by movements; but while, in automatic recognition, our movements prolong perception only in order to draw from it its useful effects, and thus take us further from the perceived object, here, on the other hand, they draw us to it, to mark its contours. It is in this process that memory-images play a dominant and not only an accessory part. If our movements renounce their merely practical aim and our activity retraces its path to emphasize the salient features of the perceived object, then the images analogous to present perception, though robbed of many of their details, will come regularly and not just accidentally, and will flow into the mould offered by perception. The question here is whether perception determines the appearance of recollections or whether the latter arise in some degree spontaneously. Bergson wants to prove that motion can only produce motion, in which case the rôle of the cerebral vibrations is simply to impress a certain attitude on the body, an attitude which admits of the insertion of recollections. In this case, memory cannot be a function of the brain, and recollections cannot be stored in it. Cerebral lesions would then be explained as due, in some cases, to the fact that the body is hindered from taking the attitude appropriate to the recall of certain images, and, in others, to the fact that, the last active phase in the realization of a recollection being in some way interfered with, it cannot actualize itself.

In proportion as attention is concentrated, perception becomes more distinct and detailed, but the effect is not the same as that caused by a more powerful external stimulus. It is due, at bottom, to the consciousness of a certain general adaptation of the body. In attention, the mind turns back, as it were, from following the useful effect of present perception, this negative side of attention being expressed at first in the inhibition of movement. At once, however, there intervene subtle movements whereby the contours of the perceived objects are retraced. It is in this positive side of attention that memory-images are of so much importance. Attention analyzes its object through successive attempted syntheses or hypotheses, analogous memory-images being thrown, as it were, in the direction of the new perception. These images,

however, are suggested and selected through the movements of imitation, whereby the perception is continued, and which serve as the common mould for both the perception and the recollection. Attentive perception thus implies a real reflection, an external projection of an image actively created and similar to the object perceived. Bergson uses the comparison of an electric circuit where all the elements are held in a state of mutual tension; there is such solidarity between the mind and the object that to pass to a superior state of concentration is, as it were, to create a completely new circle enclosing the first. The narrowest circle of memory would be that nearest to perception and containing only the object itself and the consecutive image covering it. Corresponding to greater efforts of mental expansion increasingly larger circles would successively enclose each other.

Memory, it seems to Bergson, is elastic and can dilate indefinitely; and it is, thus, all memory that enters each circle, reflecting on the object, as it expands, an increasing number of suggested details, and so reconstructing with the object the more and more remote conditions with which it forms a system. Thus with greater expansions of memory further depths of reality are attained. The same mental life can be repeated with many successive degrees of expansion; it is simplified or complicated according to its level. Present perception usually determines the direction in which the mind turns, but according to the degree of tension, the perception is formed with a greater or less number of memory-images. The largest circle of memory would be that where all personal recollections are exactly localized, where our past existence is completely unfolded. This limiting circle would be repeated; the same recollections that entered into the first circle would become successively less personal and original and increasingly capable, as they become more commonplace, of applying to present perception. At a certain moment, memory and perception are indistinguishable; it is here that memory is bound to the details of bodily motion. In proportion as this limit is approached, the practical importance of memory increases.

In the case, then, of those cerebral lesions where, in the presence of external stimulus, the body cannot automatically take the precise attitude whereby the selection of recollections is made, attention can no longer be fixed by the object. But, in the other cases, where memory-images no longer find, through the body, the means of application whereby they are prolonged in action, then attention cannot be fixed by the subject; that is, the lesions must involve, in the first place, the mechanisms which continue the received vibration into automatic motion, and, in the second, the cortical centers which prepare voluntary

motion by furnishing to it its necessary sensorial antecedent. Bergson again cites the conclusions and observations derived from his study of mental pathology in support of this distinction.<sup>1</sup>

There is, according to this view of Bergson's, a continued progress and becoming in which a misty idea condenses in images, and these, still fluid, solidify in their coalescence with perceptions. Ordinary scientific thought analyzes this into a series of terms, and in this way each newly discovered fact adds to the complication, and endless new phases of development must be introduced. It is owing to such analysis that so much confusion has arisen in this field. According to Bergson, the pretended destruction of recollections due to cerebral lesions is simply an interruption of the continued progress whereby recollections are actualized. Distinct perception arises through the union of two opposite currents, the one centripetal from the external object, giving passive perception and the mechanical reactions accompanying it, and the other centrifugal, starting from pure recollections and tending towards the actualization of these. The centers where sensation is born can be stimulated in some way from both sides. They can receive the impressions of the sense-organs and thus of the real object, but they can, at the same time, suffer through successive intermediaries the influence of a virtual object.

This can, of course, be nothing but a scheme of what in reality is a very complicated thing; the point of importance is that the characteristic process of attentive recognition is centrifugal, from idea to perception and not vice versa. Pure recollection, in the measure in which it is actualized, tends to provoke in the body the corresponding sensations. The vibrations of the sensorial centers preparing the motions accomplished or begun by the body are less the real cause of sensations than the mark of the body's power and the conditions of its efficiency.

Our recollections, even when actualized and thus present, remain attached to the past; otherwise they could never be recognized as recollections. To imagine is not to recollect, and an image only appears as past if it has been searched for and found in the past. There is, indeed, a difference of kind between sensations and perceptions on the one hand and recollections on the other. The present is what interests us and what provokes action, while the past is essentially powerless. The present is, at the same time, a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future, and so it is sensori-motor and consists in the consciousness of

<sup>1</sup>Mat. et mém., pp. 113-128.



the body. At any given moment only one system of sensations and motions is possible; that is why the present seems so absolutely distinguished from the past. In the continuity of becoming, the present moment is due to the quasi-instantaneous view of perception; the cross-section thus obtained is the material world—matter, extended in space and in a continually renewed present. In the present, again, is the materiality of our existence.

The powerlessness of recollections is the reason that they remain in a latent state; they are unconscious mental states. Consciousness, in the sense of awareness, has been usually considered the *sine qua non* of a mental state, but, if awareness is primarily the mark of the actually lived and acting, we can cease being aware of what is inactive without its thereby ceasing to exist. Bergson suggests as a preliminary definition of the unconscious: "that which, not being conscious, can become so."<sup>1</sup> Apart from any view as to what consciousness is in itself, in a being with organic functions, its rôle is to preside over action and illuminate choice. If this practical function is recognized, there is no more reason for saying that the past, once it has been perceived, is effaced, than for supposing that material objects cease to exist when unperceived. Our former mental life is, in reality, far more existent for us than the external world of which only a small part is perceived, for our character synthesizes it; it is the whole of our past experience, although in a simplified form, which we make use of in action.

Owing, however, to our practical obsession with the idea of space, it is hard not to ask further where is memory kept, and where is the past stored up, if it is preserved? But the survival of anything is not made clearer by saying that it is in something else. The brain is an extended image in a ceaselessly renewed present, consequently, if the survival of memory is made to depend on it, the problem is simply transferred.

Duration cannot be made up of our instantaneous views; the present should be defined not as what is, but rather as "what is in the making."<sup>2</sup> What we really perceive is the immediate past, the present being the undivided progress of the past into the future; all perception is thus already memory. Consciousness lights up that part of the past which, leaning to the future, seeks to determine it in joining itself to it. Only those states further in the past which can also help in determining the undetermined future are illumined. Organic life is directed towards practical action, and we are thus unwilling to admit the integral survival of the past.

<sup>1</sup>Remarks as to the part played by the unconscious in mental life, *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. x, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Mat et mém., p. 162.

Now, if what is perceived is only the immediate past, we can trace the connection between the two forms of memory which have so far been distinguished. From this point of view, the body is the incessantly reborn part which is always present, or rather immediately past. The body is an image itself, as we have seen, and cannot store all other images, being a part of them. Nor can past perceptions be localized in the brain; the brain rather is among them, not they in it. The body gives at each moment a cross-section of becoming and, being the bond between the action of things on us and our reaction on them, it is the seat of sensory-motor phenomena.

In order to make his view clear, Bergson uses the spatial image of a cone to represent the totality of recollections. This must of course be taken with the caution that is always necessary in using such images. The base of this cone is taken as motionless, located in the past, while its apex is constantly advancing in contact with the moving plane of our actual representation of the universe. In the apex of the cone is the image of the body making part of this plane. Here is the quasi-instantaneous form of memory which is of the body and is constituted by the totality of sensory-motor systems organized by habit. To this form, the true memory of the past always gives a base. The first form is the moving point of the second, inserted in the advancing plane of experience. Being thus seen as still distinguished, but not as absolutely cut off from one another, it becomes natural that the two forms of memory should lend themselves to mutual application. True memory presents to the motor mechanisms all the recollections capable of guiding them in their reactions, through the lessons of past experience, while, on the other hand, these mechanisms give the means of realization to recollections which must, for their actualization, descend to the point where action is accomplished.

The impulsive man lives almost entirely in the present, relying to stimuli by more or less immediate reactions, while, at the other extreme, a dreamer lives in the past. Balance and common sense demand an interpenetration of the two forms of memory, an organization of true memory with conduct. It is due to the fact that children have not effected this organization that spontaneous memory is so developed in them. As conscious memory gains in force of penetration it loses its extension.

In sleep there seems to be at least a functional relaxation of tension of the nervous system, and, cut off from practical action, we are plunged into a dream-life, a life lived among our recollections. Those who have survived suffocation, where there is a sudden violent turning of the mind from practical life, often testify to having at that moment mentally re-lived in detail the past events of life.

In the extreme state of contemplative memory all that can appear is the singular and personal, while in merely motor memory there can only be impersonal generality of action. But only in most exceptional cases are these limits found in isolation; as a rule, there is an interpenetration of the two which manifest itself, on the one hand, by the perception of differences and, on the other, by that of resemblances. The general idea is due to the fusion of these two perceptions. As we saw in Chapter I, resemblance is first lived and felt, and only later comes to be intelligently perceived. In the course of this transition, the perception of individuals and the conception of classes are formed. Memory grafts distinctions into the spontaneously abstracted resemblances, and intellect gains the clear idea of generality by reflection on the operation of the habit of extracting resemblances. These two divergent operations go on ceaselessly, the one constructing stable images stored in the memory, while, through the other, unstable and vanishing representations are formed. The essential characteristic of the general idea is thus to move ceaselessly between the planes of action and of pure memory. This means that, between the sensory-motor mechanism pictured as at the apex of the cone and the totality of recollections forming its base, there is room for endless repetitions of mental life pictured by all successive sections of the cone. Again we must not take these different planes of memory as things; they may be pictured as being, as it were, ceaselessly created anew by the incessant motion of the mind. We here reach the heart of Bergson's theory of memory. The same mental phenomenon may involve a multitude of different planes of consciousness marking all the intermediate degrees between dream and action. Only in the last of these does the body intervene.

Now, as we have seen, we can only get a real view and explanation of anything by going from the whole to the parts. The continuity of reality is cut up only for the convenience of practical life, and it is thus dissociation which needs explanation rather than association. The tendency of all recollections to draw all others is thus easily explained by the natural return of the mind to its primary undivided unity of perception. Our whole personality, with all its recollections, enters into present perception; accordingly, if perception evokes recollections, it is not by the mechanical addition of more and more numerous elements; it is rather by the expansion of our entire consciousness which, by spreading over a vaster surface, can make a more detailed inventory. On Bergson's hypothesis, we start with the continuity of mental facts, and what remains to be explained is not the association and cohesion of mental states, but the double movement of contraction and expansion, by which consciousness narrows and expands its content. This

movement Bergson deduces, as usual, from the necessities of life.

Let us take the limiting case where mental life is reduced to purely sensory-motor functions. Here we have association by similarity, for the present perception leads to action in virtue of its resemblance to past perception, and also association by contiguity, since the motions consecutive to former perceptions are reproduced. So we have the two forms of association as lived, though probably not as thought. They are the two complementary aspects of one and the same tendency possessed by all organisms, to extract from the given situation what is useful, and to store the appropriate reaction in the form of a motor habit for use on future occasions.

Let us go now to the opposite extreme from the merely acted to the merely dreamt. Every recollection is different from every other, but, if enough details are neglected, any one can be made to resemble the present situation. Once a recollection is connected with a perception, an indefinite number of events contiguous to the recollection attach themselves to the perception. Everything can be associated where the exigencies of action do not limit and regulate this association. In this limiting case, association would be due to choice, while, in the other, it is absolutely determined. These are, however, but the extremes. The whole memory, as a rule, responds to the appeal of the present situation by two simultaneous motions: one of translation, whereby it is carried entire before experience, and contracts more and more in view of action without being divided, and the other of, as it were, rotation on itself, whereby it turns its most useful aspect towards the present situation. To the different degrees of contraction correspond different forms of association by similarity, and for association by contiguity also there are an endless number of planes.

We can see from this brief consideration of the two forms of association that they are of all imaginable forms the most useful. The interest of living organisms must always be to seize in the present situation that which resembles a former one and then to bring to this what preceded and what followed it in order to profit by past experience. Association by contiguity is always the end, for action is the end, while association by similarity is the means. But, with the development of consciousness, the latter form of association is increasingly accentuated. It is through association by similarity, that we have partial power to turn from the present and the practical, and to dream, for while the necessities of action still determine the laws of recall, there may be much that is ill-defined in the relation of resemblance, and thus many unnecessary recollections also find their way to consciousness.



The laws of various mental dispositions are still to be discovered, and the greater part of this field remains unexplored. But in any case, the systems of associations are not built up by recollections juxtaposed like atoms; always there are dominant recollections round which others group themselves, and such dominant images multiply as memory dilates, becoming distinct in what was previously a confused mass.

From the study of memory we can see that the function of the body in relation to the mind is to give it balance. If a decision is to be made, our organized experience must converge towards actions where, with the past serving as the matter, are found the unforeseen forms personality impresses. But action must realize itself in the present situation, that is, in the circumstances due to the position of the body in space and time. Even in intellectual work an idea must touch the present, in being more or less acted by the body at the same time as represented by the mind. The activity of the mind may, however, extend indefinitely beyond our accumulated recollections, as these do in their turn beyond sensations and motions. Still, it is the latter that ensure the general condition of attention to life, and this attention to life is of primary practical importance.

The various cases of serious or slight derangement of memory only strengthen the conclusion of Bergson's general theory that, while all mental states have their cerebral concomitant, the relation between these two terms cannot be construed as parallelism. The latter thesis Bergson has opposed from many points of view.<sup>1</sup> Variations in the cerebral state always give rise to variations in the mental state, but the reverse of this is not necessarily true. Brain lesions bring lesions of consciousness just as the presence or absence of a screw may stop the functioning of a machine, and yet each part of the screw in no sense corresponds to each part of the machine. Bergson's general conclusion is that the relation between the mental fact and its cerebral concomitant is not to be expressed in any of the concepts at our service. He attempts to formulate it as follows: "given a mental state, that part of it which would be translated by an attitude or action of the body, which can, in short, be acted, is represented by the brain; the rest is independent, and has no cerebral equivalent."<sup>2</sup> To the same cerebral state many different mental states may correspond, but not any state whatever, only those having a common motor "scheme." If motion is given, there is a margin for images and a still greater margin for thought,

<sup>1</sup>See note (2), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol i, p. 51.

and so thought is relatively free and independent of the cerebral activity which conditions it. The brain thus helps to recall useful images of the past, but still more does it provisionally cast aside all others. In its association with the brain, the mind drinks the waters of oblivion and is plunged in forgetfulness.

In dealing with pure perception, we saw that, in it, there is a coincidence of subject and object. Now that the theory of memory has been given in its main outlines, the nature of this coincidence and thus of the relation between mind and matter can receive further treatment.

In perception we seize at the same time a state of consciousness and a reality independent of us. This reality is an indivisible motion occupying duration. In dealing with duration, we saw that, owing to the much slower rhythm and greater tension of our duration, we are able to seize in a moment of our time and in the form of a sensible quality an indefinitely great number of vibrations. Consciousness, confronted with matter, in an infinitely short time, seizes billions of successive events taking place in matter. The heterogeneity of sensible qualities is thus due to our memory, while the relative homogeneity of objective changes consists in their natural relaxation. Our belief in the more or less homogeneous substratum of sensible qualities must therefore be founded on the act whereby we divine, in the quality itself, something which goes beyond our perception, something making it seem full of suspected but unperceived details. Bergson gives as a definition of subjective, "that which appears adequately and entirely known," and of objective, "that which is known in such a manner that an increasing number of new impressions can be added to the idea we have of it."<sup>1</sup> The objectivity of perception thus consists in the very fact of this multiplicity of internal movement. A sensible quality vibrates and lives deep down, though, on the surface, it appears immovable. To perceive is to immobilize. On the other hand, the subjectivity of perception is now more clearly seen to be due to memory. Our pure perception is a system of nascent actions in which the reality of things is penetrated and lived. The sensible qualities of matter would be known in themselves, within and not without, if we could disengage ourselves from the rhythm of our consciousness.

Even pure perception occupies duration, and its moments are thus not really those of things, but of consciousness. It is never actually instantaneous, for consciousness already enters, prolonging one moment in another, and, in a relatively simple intuition, seizing a multitude of moments of a less

<sup>1</sup>Donn. imméd., p. 63.

intense duration. We can now see more fully how perception and matter combine, and how, too, they are distinguished. If we ideally divide our moments and thus eliminate all memory, we pass from pure perception to matter, from subject to object. Matter is seen as tending indefinitely to a continuity of homogeneous vibrations without ever quite reaching this limit, for in concrete movement there is already something of consciousness. There is thus, in matter, something more than, but not something essentially different from, what is given to us. Some of the physical qualities of matter are doubtless as yet undiscovered; but, according to such a view, it can have no other than physical qualities, that is, its rôle can only be to inhibit or transmit movement. Only by establishing that matter has no hidden powers can the phenomena of mind have independent reality attributed to them.

Quality and quantity are thus drawn nearer to each other and related through the idea of tension. There still remains the opposition between the extended and the unextended. These are but extremes obtained through analysis from the immediate perception we have, which is always, as we have seen, of the extensive. All qualities of different orders participate in extension in various degrees, and it does not belong only to a privileged group of perceptions. The extension of most of our perceptions and sensations, it is true, pales before the superior utility of tactual and in a lesser degree, visual extension. Perception, however, divides the continuity of extension, bounding objects where our possible action on them ends. In a sense, of course, there are multiple objects, different men, animals, and so on, each obeying its law of development, but even these cannot be distinguished with absolute clearness from their surroundings. In order the more easily to divide extension we persuade ourselves that it is arbitrarily divisible. Beneath the continuity of sensible qualities we spread, as it were, a net, with meshes indefinitely variable and capable of unlimited diminution; this is conceived homogeneous space.

While perception divides matter into independent objects, memory solidifies the continued flow of things into sensible qualities, prolonging the past in the present. Action can dispose of the future in proportion as perception, enlarged by memory, has contracted the past.

The fundamental law of matter is to respond to action by immediate reaction which continues it in the same duration; that is, matter is in a ceaselessly renewed present, and in this consists necessity. Partially undetermined actions can therefore only belong to beings capable of fixing the becoming to which their becoming is to apply, and of solidifying it in distinct moments. Mind can thus condense and assimilate matter in order to direct it, just as the efficient man seizes in

a glance the details of a situation and can thereby dominate it. By thus disengaging itself from the rhythm of the flow of matter, the mind directs actions which escape necessity. Increasing tension of duration, expressing increasing intensity of life, determines, not only the concentration of perception, but also the indetermination of action on matter.

Having solidified the flow of reality into sensible qualities, we then distinguish and relate the successive moments thus obtained by a thread common to us and to things, a scheme of succession in general, homogeneous time. It is now still more clearly evident that homogeneous space and time are not properties of things nor essential conditions of our knowing them, but simply express the double work of division and solidification, which we apply to the continuity of reality, in order to insure ourselves points of application whereby we may introduce real changes. They are the scheme of our action on matter, dividing continuity and fixing becoming, which have a real extension and duration.

There is now no longer any difficulty in the fact that we are conscious of the indivisible unity of perception. Consciousness and matter may still be in contact in perception, for the divisibility of matter belongs not to matter, but to the symbol of space which we sketch beneath it. Extended matter, from this point of view, is like a consciousness which is almost in the state where all is in equilibrium and reciprocally neutralized. On the other hand, there is a gradual passage from idea to image and thence to perception and sensation, and so, in the measure that it approaches action, the state of mind approaches extension. But mental unity is not thereby contradicted, for the extension obtained is continuous and indivisible.

Mind thus places itself on matter in pure perception, and yet is distinguished through memory which contracts the moments of matter, in order to manifest the actions which give the reason for the mind's union with the body. So Bergson solves the problem of the relation of mind and body in terms of time rather than in terms of space. Starting with pure perception, where subject and object coincide, the two terms of matter and memory can be distinguished and developed in their respective tensions of duration. The spatial distinction, the putting mind out of space and matter in it, admits of no degrees, but, in duration there are an indefinite number of degrees between matter and fully developed mind, capable not only of indeterminate but of reasoned action. The growing complexity of the nervous system conditioning stimuli and organic reactions, and the consequent latitude of action in space, is only the material symbol of an internal force, which allows living beings ever increasingly to disengage themselves



from the rhythm of the flow of things. This internal force is the growing power of memory whereby the past is ever better retained and thus enabled more and more deeply to influence the future.

Corresponding to all possible degrees of intensity of memory—that is, of tenseness of duration—there are all degrees of liberty. Matter and memory are certainly distinct, but, in pure perception, they partly coincide, and the lowest degree of mind is a real part of matter. In its own way, too, matter imitates memory, each moment repeating the past moment, its past thus being given in its present. A more or less free being creates the new and so its past cannot be read in the present except in the form of recollections. The past is acted by matter and imagined by mind, in general as well as in the particular case of the memory of the individual. We must remember that it is only for practical purposes that matter has been held to be under the sway of absolute necessity, and that each moment of the universe has been considered as mathematically deducible from the preceding one. This, it is true, is the limit towards which matter tends. Freedom has, however, its roots in necessity, even if this necessity is not absolute. Mind draws from matter the perceptions giving it its material, and returns these in the form of actions on which it impresses its liberty.

#### FREEDOM.<sup>1</sup>

Through this study of the relation of mind and body preliminary conclusions have been reached as to the general relation of consciousness and matter. With the development of organisms increasingly capable of unforeseen and spontaneous motions there has been a concomitant evolution of consciousness. It is as though consciousness illumined the sphere of possible activity, which surrounds the actions effectively accomplished by the living being. When many actions seem equally possible, consciousness is intense; where one action alone is possible consciousness is nullified. Accordingly it signifies hesitation and choice. The more the higher centers of the brain develop, the greater is the number of motor paths, consequently the more choice is there as to the redirection of some motor stimulus in effective action. At the same time, consciousness, growing ever tenser, is able the better to retain

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Donn. imméd., Chap. III, pp. 176-184; Mat. et mém., p. 205; Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 55-56, 62-63; L'Evol. créat., pp. 51-52, 156-157.

the past and organize it with the present, making its decisions ever newer and fuller. By thus contracting, in memory, a greater number of moments of the duration of things, its increasing indetermination and domination of matter are assured. These facts led Bergson to a first formulation of his general view of life six years before the publication of *L'Évolution créatrice*, in which his world-vision meets with its full presentation.<sup>1</sup>

Life in the world would seem, he thinks, to be an immense effort made by consciousness to wrest from matter something that matter is unwilling to part with. Matter, practically under the sway of necessity, has, however, a mechanical aptitude for action, and this capacity consciousness uses, converting it into contingent motions in space and unforeseen events in time, thus striving to externalize and make effective as much as possible of its own internal creative energy. Each special effort of consciousness is not of long duration; it is seized as a prisoner of the very mechanisms it has formed for its own purposes. It is again and again lost in automatism and unconsciousness. So, in the majority of organisms, life is entirely consumed in the effort at self-preservation, unconscious of any higher end.

It is due to the human brain that man has partially triumphed. But even he, as we shall soon see more fully, can rarely be said to act freely or creatively. He, too, is more often the victim of automatism. In general, the superiority of man's brain is its capacity for forming endless motor habits, not only a limited number, as is the case with animals. Language has been one of the chief instruments of man's liberation, in spite of the fact that it ultimately inflicts automatism on thought. The brain can, to a large extent, free itself from bodily automatism through the very fact that it can ceaselessly create new motor habits which hold others in check. Without the brain, the higher operations of thought would never have had the opportunity to appear: they would still have been plunged in unconsciousness.

Consciousness has thus used matter by imitating it, but, in so doing, has only very imperfectly succeeded in dominating it. Physiological life must thus appear as the limitation of the life of consciousness itself. It is perhaps clearer now why, in Chapter I, it was asserted that consciousness, as fundamentally duration, was the life of all things. The whole world has duration; time must have real efficacy; the future cannot be absolutely determined, for it endlessly succeeds the past. Among living beings in the world, there are all degrees of tension of duration, from the duration of matter approaching

<sup>1</sup>Paral. psycho-phys., *Bulletin de la soc. fr. de phil.*, vol. i, pp. 55-56.

the limit of homogeneous vibration to the intensity of consciousness accompanying the free action of a human being. It is the consciousness of the individual that must now be dealt with: man's freedom, his varying mental states and his personality. Only after such an investigation will Bergson's general view of the world in its final form be clear.

What is meant by a free act on the part of an individual? In general we have seen that, through greater tension of consciousness, the individual is capable of greater indetermination of action. *A priori*, therefore, it would seem that the more completely he is capable of organizing his past experience with the present, the freer will his action be. At the same time, the more completely will it express his character. But the matter must be taken up more fully than this, particularly as the problem of freedom has been so involved in dispute that the very meaning of the word is obscure.

As taken up from the standpoint of the individual consciousness, the question is, what is the relation between successive mental states? Bergson points out that, even from the point of view that mental states may be taken as distinct things—the point of view which he so ceaselessly opposes—the phenomena of their reciprocal determination and attraction seem to evade all formulation. Often an idea may raise up a series of antecedents which, while appearing to be its cause, are really its effect; in some form it is present, evoking them before explicitly taking shape in consciousness. Even after a resolution is formed, we weigh motives as though the mind had a presentment of the sudden intervention of the will and wished to legitimatize it in advance. But, after what has been said of true duration as opposed to this view of mental states, it seems unnecessary to multiply instances of its failure to cover the facts. Both the determinists and their adversaries are apt to talk of conflicts of motives, desires, aversions and so on, as though language really could express these, when, in truth, it can but give the impersonal element of something which is absolutely individual and, what is more, cannot be treated as a distinct entity except symbolically. Each of us has his own way of feeling and, the deeper any feeling, the more really is his own personality reflected in it. Language, however, must have the same word for an indefinite number of individual feelings; those, for instance, which are excited by similar causes or which express themselves externally in something the same way. And, for the purposes of practical life, this, as we have seen, is necessary and desirable.

What Bergson calls a free act is the external manifestation of a state into which the whole person enters. Liberty can be seen, on such a definition, not to be absolute and to admit of degrees. In the first place, some of the states of conscious-

ness of an individual do not organize with others; hypnotic suggestion, for instance, does not incorporate itself with the mass of mental states, but may, at a given moment, put itself in the place of the self constituted by these states. Some passion or hereditary vice, suddenly aroused, may act in the same way. Indeed, there may be a whole series of states reciprocally interpenetrating and yet not really organized in the character. Such parasitic states may so influence our actions as to deprive them of true liberty. Bergson, however, adds that, if suggestion is assimilated by our whole self, it becomes persuasion; and passion, if it reflects the personality, has not the same fated character. Any state filling the whole self, and thus expressing it, leads to free decisions, for the individual is then self-determined. Free acts, however, are rare even among those who are most thoughtful as to their actions, for we usually perceive ourselves as reflected through space, not in the duration which is our real being. The living self thus becomes covered with a crust of fixed facts, which serve the purposes of language and practical life. Our daily actions are inspired much less by the mobile feelings themselves than by the invariable images to which these have come to adhere. When an impression simply stimulates an idea that has, so to speak, solidified on this surface and is there united with it, we act as conscious automata. Such usual actions, in some ways much resembling reflex acts, are the unified substratum to our free activity, and play much the same rôle in respect to it as our organic functions do to the totality of conscious life. Even in serious situations, we are apt to part with our freedom through mere inertia, allowing some merely local process to accomplish itself when the whole self should have been tuned to act. Sometimes the intensely personal feelings and ideas, even though pushed to the obscure depths of consciousness, may burst irresistibly through the external crust of commonplace reasons and motives for some action, and decision is made, as it seems at the moment, without any reason. In these cases, when the self really asserts itself, there is the best of reasons; our action then implies the whole of what is most intimately ours; its reason is the combined weight of our past experience. It is not in our insignificant actions, but in serious crises, that we are apt thus really to choose in spite of what are usually called motives. The absence of tangible reason is all the more striking, the more really we are free.

The self, as we saw, changed ceaselessly, its duration being a heterogeneous continuity; and so, at every moment of deliberation, it is modified and its motives are thereby altered. How a determined self with fixed contrary motives ever could decide, it would be hard to say; if one motive were stronger



than another, then its victory would be assured. But this is only symbolic representation; there is, in reality, a dynamic series of interpenetrating states reinforcing one another and culminating in a more or less free act by a natural evolution, free, in so far as it comes from the whole self or character. There is no sense in saying that we are determined in that our character determines us, for the character is the synthesis of past experiences; it is the self, and so, in this case, we are self-determining. In the same way, a false conception is implied when it is asked if we are free to alter our character. It alters ceaselessly, and, in so far as new acquisitions are simply grafted on and not fused with the self, our freedom suffers. If fusion takes place, the change of character is ours in that we have appropriated it. So, if a free act is defined as one that emanates from the self alone, it has been shown that there is freedom.

Before going a little further into the meaning of freedom, some mention must be made of the arguments based on a discussion of whether past action could have been different, and whether future action can be foreseen. In looking back at past action, it is true that, in the deliberation preceding it, we can represent divergent possible directions which the course of our deliberation and consequent action might have taken. Of course only one of these directions was taken or rather there were in reality no directions; there was simply the self continuously developing through its various hesitations till the free action was detached, as Bergson aptly describes it, like over-ripe fruit. But the ordinary way of looking at things is, as we have so often seen, essentially practical and thus mechanistic. For this real development, both determinists and their opponents substitute the two fixed directions, and the activity of the self, oscillating at a definite point of intersection where it has to choose. This, of course, is representing duration through spatial symbols and can only result in the most inflexible determinism. What is represented is a past thing, not a living progress; consequently to ask whether the path other than that taken could have been chosen is senseless. Such a discussion has no bearing on the question of freedom, for the latter has to do with the quality of the act itself. Yet, even when the self feels itself free and asserts that it is, any attempt at explaining its freedom usually ends, through spatial symbolism, in giving the case to determinism.

There is still the case of future action to be considered. It is almost needless to say that it is often possible to reach a probable conclusion as to some future action. Even though the character of any individual is ceaselessly modified, appreciable changes are rarely sudden. Consequently, in speaking of the probable action of an individual, we are really judging

his character, and therefore his past. But the argument of determinism is that, if all the conditions were known, there could be infallible prevision of consequent action. Now, it is the deep feelings and most intimate states which reflect the personality and thus are translated in free action. And it is just such states that it is impossible for any other person to estimate in their intensity. Only through experiencing such states himself, can another really know their quality; any other form of representation is spatial and thus merely symbolic. Exactly to estimate a conscious state is therefore only possible to him who lives that state. The only form of external measurement which is approximately accurate is by a later estimate of its importance in the final action. The actor himself does not foresee; he only sees and acts, while an outsider has no real knowledge of the matter until after the act is accomplished, when, of course, he can symbolically represent deliberation as a play of forces and attribute to each its importance in the final decision; it is then no longer the future that is dealt with but the past.

All the arguments of the determinist as to past and future action involve the illusion of treating the intensity of mental states as a mathematical property rather than as the quality of the state itself, and also the fallacy of representing a dynamic progress by the static representation which can be made of it once it is accomplished. Both these mistakes evidently imply the fundamental one of replacing duration by the spatial symbolism legitimate only in superficial and practical life.

One more position taken by determinism must be mentioned. Even though it may be impossible to foresee an act, yet, they say, it must be absolutely determined by mental antecedents and thus obey laws as do the phenomena of nature. The real character of concrete mental phenomena is not enquired into by those making this statement, but it is declared that, as phenomena, they necessarily obey the law of causality, and that from the same causes, the same effects must follow. A fallacy is immediately obvious here, for it is of the very nature of the fundamental states of consciousness to be incapable of repetition; there is absolute heterogeneity of the moments of true duration. Causality cannot apply, at least in the same way as in the material world, whose movements we have seen can be treated as homogeneous one with another, so nearly do they tend to this limit. A profound internal cause has its effect once and can never be repeated, and if, then, it is asserted that the two were indissolubly united, this once more involves the fallacies arising with regard to past and future action.

Bergson quotes Janet as saying that there are only two

proofs of freedom.<sup>1</sup> We are free in that we feel we are, and we are free in that we feel responsible for our conduct. The question of responsibility will have to be dealt with in the next chapter when we have had something to say of society, and thus will be more prepared for the discussion of ethical problems. Here, however, let us confine ourselves to the first statement. It also sums up Bergson's views; in the intuition of duration and its nature lies the proof of our freedom. Such a truth, however, is not capable of development; it can only attempt to combat the opposing views of determinism and, as the latter theory is continually meeting with new applications in science, it seems as though, while it advanced, liberty were losing ground or at best stood still. Another advantage enjoyed by the determinists is that, while determinism can only be declared to be refuted by experience, all definitions of freedom simply lead back to determinism. For, in attempting to define or discuss, duration is almost inevitably spatially symbolized: two opposing intellectual points of view are then reached, that of determinism and that of arbitrary free will. Our really free actions however are incommensurable with any intellectual equivalent and escape being arbitrary just as they avoid necessary determination. Arbitrary choice is not freedom; it is mere mechanical oscillation, and its upholders cannot long maintain their ground against determinism. In either of these views, really lived continuity is artificially decomposed for the greater convenience of usual knowledge. A free act comes from its antecedents through a unique evolution; in it we can find the motives explaining it and yet there is in it something new, something really creative. To obtain his view of freedom, it is in this evolution that Bergson places himself. If duration is no longer confused with space, the objections against liberty will disappear, the definitions of it, and, in a sense, the whole problem. For we are in concrete duration and the deeper we plunge in this, the less meaning has the idea of necessary determination. Life is serious because we are free; the very definition of our real selves being freedom. Through their mutual interpenetration, our states of consciousness, as they evolve, constitute a continually developing free personality. To study freedom, we must go to the crucial moments of our life where there is some important decision to make; it is here that our whole self is more likely to express itself, here that we really choose.<sup>2</sup> However, though

<sup>1</sup>Revue critique; Principes de métaphysique et de psychologie par Paul Janet, *Rev. phil.*, vol. xlv, pp. 537-538.

<sup>2</sup>The etymology of "choose" is interesting in this connection; it is derived from the same root as the verb to taste, and thus implies at the same time a preference of the self in the act and also the continued, tentative character of experience.

we can replace ourselves in pure duration and at such times are free, we rarely will to reënter ourselves and are thus rarely free. Most of the time we live externally to ourselves in space, rather than in time and in ourselves. Of course, for practical purposes, this is necessary, and even for the purposes of human society, as we shall see later, freedom must, to some extent, be relinquished. On all this superficial side of our lives determinism can take hold. But at all moments of our duration, however superficially we may live, the process of our free activity goes on, as it were in spite of us, in the very depths of our being. We are fundamentally free even if our freedom is so stifled that it has seemingly no influence on our action in the more superficial planes of experience.

Once more we are brought back to Bergson's fundamental view of the tensions of duration and consequent depths of experience. In dealing with freedom, we have been directly led to speak of self, character and personality. Before we shall be prepared to give a more complete view of the self as it figures in Bergson's thought, something must be added as to the consciousness of the individual. Here, however, we can easily see how the degrees of freedom of the self are bound up with its plunging more deeply into reality. There are not only two selves, one the practical and the other the real free self, though, for purposes of study, Bergson sometimes speaks as if there were. The same free personality is increasingly limited by the necessities of practical life, as it reaches the more superficial planes of experience. In doing so, its action becomes more and more determined. Leaving the self for the moment, we can also see that, according as the different sciences deal with these different planes of experience, the view of determinism they reach must be unequal in rigor. In mathematics, determinism must be absolute, while, in the sciences dealing with life, it cannot apply in the same way. Freedom in the individual and in the world is a reality but not a transcendent one, that is, it is in the world of experience, but limited in varying degrees according to the depth of experience reached. It can perhaps now be more clearly seen how all depths of freedom correspond to all degrees of duration.

In proportion, then, as we push deeper in duration through ever greater efforts at intuition, the more truly are we free. Knowledge and action tend to coincide with creative reality. In coincidence with the life-principle, the fullest freedom would be reached.



MENTAL EFFORT.<sup>1</sup>

We have perhaps insisted enough on the way in which the intellect spatializes and solidifies, how its natural bent is towards material reality, not considered in motion, as it really is, but as passing from state to state, so that our action may proceed, as it must, discontinuously. In short, intellect eliminates true duration from all things. But even for practical purposes, our mental states must not take too static or rigid a form. Intellect aids in the process of continual adaptation to a really changing environment and so must, even in practical life, be used in a fashion more supple than may so far have appeared. In briefly dealing with the substance of one of Bergson's most interesting articles, not only the capacity of the intellect, but its limitations can perhaps be better appreciated.<sup>1</sup>

Abstraction can be made of the physical concomitants in any mental effort and yet there is a definite mental quality still presenting itself as the distinguishing characteristic of such effort. We have already dealt with the efforts at attention and recall, when speaking of Bergson's general theory of memory. When recall was, as it were, automatic, the elements attracting one another seemed to belong to what Bergson represents as one and the same plane of memory. When effort was required, there was a movement of the mind from one plane to another. At some plane there is gathered into what Bergson calls a dynamic scheme that which, in planes nearer to the sphere of action, can be refracted in images, which become more and more impersonal till they can enter the current of practical life. We all have the feeling of this dynamic scheme though it is almost impossible to define. It does not really contain the images themselves, nor is it only their abstract meaning. It is rather the indication of the direction that must be followed in order that they may be reconstituted. The effort of memory must have as its essence the development of a concentrated scheme into an image with more or less distinct parts. Usually, in any particular case, this intensive motion is joined to the extensive one requiring no effort whereby images in one plane succeed one another; that is, there is usually a combination of effort and automatism. The feeling of effort, however, always arises in the path between the scheme and the images. Any effort at interpretation, we saw, was really one of reconstruction, and there must be a continual back and forth motion between successive hypotheses, representing supposed meanings, and what is perceived. The latter at first only impresses on thought its

<sup>1</sup>L'Eff. intell., *Rev. phil.*, vol. liii, pp. 1-27.

direction, and attempts must then be made at reconstruction of its meaning, always using it as checking the experiments made by the mind. There is a similar process in the effort to render thought precise through expressing it in speech. The direction of the movement of thought must be gradually rectified and determined, it must be given material realization, and it is this that requires effort. This appears most clearly when we consider artistic creation or other forms of invention. The highest type of mental effort is that of invention.<sup>1</sup> All effort at creation is really aimed at resolving a problem; in the light of an ideal, the means by which this ideal may be attained have to be organized and continually followed. Everything is really present in the form of a scheme; the effort must be to convert this into an image with distinct parts, and then the result is obtained. Often, in this process, the original scheme or ideal is changed by the images, or even made to disappear, and it is this that is the involuntary part in such creation. Of course, the ideal may change comparatively little throughout any process of invention, or it may remain relatively the same during certain periods, but it may also be vague, elastic and in constant fluctuation. In all mental effort, however, there are a multiplicity of images pressing and pushing to enter a certain scheme. This is hardly ever entirely modified, and thus the different parts have to reach a certain reciprocal organization. The effort involved is due to the interval filled with successive attempts by which different images try to insert themselves into the scheme, or by which, in certain cases, the scheme is progressively modified to reach its translation into images. The duration of such effort at invention is an integral part of it. It may indeed be said to be one with the invention.

The unity to which the mind tends is one of a direction, an impulse common to a great number of organized elements. It is the sort of unity that is present in life and which, though it is one, is not simple. If it were, it would be impossible to find and explain the characteristic feeling of mental effort, as Bergson has done, within the mind itself. The scheme must not be taken as hypothetical; it is a fact of experience, even though fleeting; dynamically it gives that which, in the images, is given statically. The human mind tends to the future and not only to the past which is represented by images. If the mind only operated with images, it could merely repeat and reconstruct the past as though it were working with mosaic. Consciousness would then be purely intellectual, for the intellect is occupied with dissociating, opposing and rearranging;

<sup>1</sup>"L'Effort intellectuel" is here translated "mental effort," to emphasize the fact that it is not only the intellect proper that is involved.

it cannot create or invent. It cannot add anything new. Thus we see that something more flexible is needed than images; it is this that Bergson speaks of as a dynamic scheme. It is evident that such schemes are practically the same as what have been called hypotheses furnished by intuition. Intellect cannot supply this scheme, this principle or direction of thought, it must be given by some degree of intuition representing a degree of tension of consciousness, drawing itself together to spring forward in creation; it gathers its materials, it is true, on the way, among the images presented by the intellect, but it impresses on these its new and unforeseen form. In mental effort, we have a presentation of the causal relation in its purest state. "Efficient" cause and "final" cause are but points of view which intellect can take of this relation as it really is, the passage from the less realized towards the more fully realized, from the tension of a state of reciprocal implication and interpenetration towards the extension of parts in juxtaposition.

The bearing of this discussion of mental effort is thus of the highest importance. It will throw light on the way in which consciousness is creative in the individual and in general in the world. Let us first deal with the creation of individual character and what is implied in this, in a word, with personality.

#### PERSONALITY.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that our experience begins by being impersonal. We are at first placed "outside ourselves," but from this "indistinct whole" we gradually detach ourselves as a part.<sup>2</sup> In dealing with perception, we saw that virtually we are in all the perceptible, though actually only in all that we perceive, that is, in all that solicits our action. But, since the body is gradually found to remain relatively invariable in relation to the changing objects around it on which it acts and towards which its effort is directed, it is adopted as the center of action and the source of this effort. Added to this, it is even from the first experienced in a different manner through affections, and so it is taken by the child to be himself; later, as at least the physical basis of personality. The adoption of ex-

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: Donn. imméd., pp. 97-106; Le rire, pp. 137, 154-171; Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 3-6, 14, 18-26; L'Evol. créat., pp. 1-8, 76, 108, 129, 193, 218, 231, 260, 389; Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, pp. 40-43; Percep. du chang., pp. 26-30; L'Int. phil., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xix, pp. 826-827. Presidential Address, Proc. of the Soc. for Psych. Res., vol. xxvi, pp. 475, 476.

<sup>2</sup>Discussion on Note sur les origines psychologiques de notre croyance à la loi de causalité, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. viii, p. 656.

perience as ours has also much to do with the fact that we are related to other selves. The child, through social intercourse, comes to distinguish beings similar to himself among the objects surrounding him. He probably identifies them first with a concrete representation, but gradually learns to endow them with feelings analogous to his own. At first he very likely attributes even to inanimate objects the feelings he can himself experience, and the almost exaggerated sympathy of some children for animals seems to testify to a somewhat later stage in the growth of self-consciousness. But, even though experience cannot, in one sense, be marked off into clear-cut distinctions, so much experience being mine and so much yours, yet there is a very real sense in which experience is mine, or rather, in which I, as a personality, exist in experience. *L'Evolution créatrice* opens as follows: "The existence of which we are most certain is incontestably our own, for we perceive ourselves internally, deeply."<sup>1</sup> Obviously, in the light of his whole philosophy, Bergson does not mean that the child immediately has this intense self-consciousness, whose degrees give Bergson his standard of reality. It is and must be a progressive thing, a distinction we come to make within experience, something we can more adequately seize and identify ourselves with than with any experience with which our coincidence is felt to be more partial. In sensible perception it is true we hold a reality, but we do not coincide with this reality in the same way as we can coincide with ourselves. Its duration is not of the same tension or rhythm as ours. Nor with the duration of others can there be complete coincidence, but on this important subject we shall shortly have more to say.

Consciousness, as it goes to form a personality, starts as always, almost passively, merely insinuating itself into matter, being modified and adapted rather than actively reacting to the environment. As this reaction increases, consciousness of the self as an agent will increase. In the growth of the feeling of personality, memory must also play a part. Our past is *ours* in a peculiar sense; as conscious beings, it is indissolubly united with our present. Every experience has entered into the composition of the self. Looked at as modified by these experiences, we have the self as "me", while "I" am my past as active, as controlling future experience. Of course, as has been so often said, it is but little of the past that actually becomes conscious, and it is often in only a superficial form that we use it in our actions. But, as the past grows for us, there is always the possibility of a deeper self-possession of ourselves, of a fuller intuition of our duration and thus of action more our own.

<sup>2</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 1.



Let us now take the consciousness of personality at any later stage of development. We have seen how, for the needs of practical life, our experience of the self, as of all things, is necessarily a very superficial one. We artificially project ourselves, the real selves which are ceaselessly in the making in pure duration, in the homogeneous time of practical life. Language, and all that is expressed by it, the common and impersonal in the impressions of mankind, cover and even crush the fleeting impressions of the individual; the deeper our feelings, the more distorted are they. We act the greater part of our lives through the superficial crust of crystallized juxtaposed states which it is useful to substitute for our inner selves. Once the self is held to be such a succession of distinct states, personality is simply divided into these states, or else a mysterious substance must be posited by which they are somehow appropriated. But there is no rigid immovable substratum, nor are there in reality any distinct states; simply, as Bergson so often calls it, the continued "melody" of our deeper life. This indivisible flux is our personality, and it can only be seized by an effort of sympathy with ourselves—by intuition.

Any state may be compared to an attitude in a dance. For the self is an indivisible movement, an impulse imparted to the states of consciousness as the motion of the dancer impresses successive forms on the body. The material of our states may be found to be drawn from around us, but their form is original owing to their implication in the impulse of consciousness. This impulse is one, and if our attention were sufficiently turned from the needs of practical life, we could hold our whole past history as one in a deep intuition of our duration. Actually, we cannot reach very far, or for more than the shortest time, towards such a fundamental experience. Consciousness is inevitably limited by the needs of organic life through which it develops. It is our more superficial selves that must act for the most part in daily life. The more, however, we really coincide with ourselves and concentrate our past concretely in an action, the less superficial does it become, the more really ours and free. The self that functions always puts more of itself into an action than we are conscious of, since the past is there in some form even when our deeds are most automatic and trivial. But there are all degrees of depth of personality presented in actions, and the more really it is we ourselves that act, the more are we conscious of ourselves.

Our internal duration is thus, from one point of view, a continued growth of memory, but of such a kind that the present, by its continuous change of quality, witnesses to the rolling up of the past, which is ever pushing it on into the future.

But there is another aspect of the matter which we have not

so far considered. Personality, besides being a growth, is a continuous unfolding. Everything living is a tendency, and the very essence of a tendency is to develop as does a sheaf, creating, by the very fact of its growth, different directions among which its initial impulse is scattered. The human race as a whole, as we shall see later, has lost much of what the original impulse of life contained in it. Each individual has inherited still less, although many now incompatible, dissociated tendencies still leave their traces in him. And, further, in the development of his own personality, an individual must abandon still more. The child seems so full of promise from the very fact that in him are still united many nascent personalities or possibilities of future developments of character. As life is lived and personality develops, these different tendencies become incompatible. This process goes on all through life so far as we really and actively live it. Ceaselessly we abandon much and ceaselessly we must choose. Our character is the changing result of this choice. Once the self has been cut out from the rest of experience as something of which we are conscious in a special manner, we must still go on forming ourselves, we must make the continual effort at self-creation.

Our character is thus the condensation of a history, starting with the dispositions and tendencies which were ours at birth, and gradually enriched by all our subsequent experience. It is in directing the course of this experience that we make or mar our characters, for each state modifies the self, being the new form given to it. This indefinite self-creation is the better and the freer, the more we deliberate on our actions and seek to act from the best that is in us. Our immediate consciousness of duration, which is the coincidence of personality with itself, admits of degrees; the more deeply we are conscious of the self as active, as being a progress in duration, the more the parts of our personality interpenetrate, till our whole being is impelled forward in future action. It is at such moments that we are most free. The more fully we deliberate, the more mature is the action evolved; that is, it is likely to be on the basis of our real personality, our most fundamental dispositions and feelings. But we usually act, as we saw in speaking of freedom, in the light of a much less intense consciousness of our duration. The self is, at all times, the capacity of appropriating, from every experience, something which modifies future experience. The question of its freedom of self-creation looks both ways. In the first instance, it depends on what attitudes and dispositions have been built up in its past, whether automatism has been allowed to creep over its freedom, not only in trivial matters but in the more important concerns of life. Again, looking forward, it depends upon how much of the self is cast into any act, whether it is capable of

breaking through the inevitably acquired habits, at least when matters of deep interest are at stake.

Deep down is the impulse of our particular life, but it may have had no chance for real development. Gradually encrusted with superficial states and modes of behavior, it may remain thwarted and undeveloped; but in itself it is free, it is our fundamental self.<sup>1</sup> In this sense it seems that a distinction might be introduced between our more fundamental personality and our character;<sup>2</sup> the latter must be a more superficial thing, a matter of the degree to which our experience has crystallized and hindered the free expression of the creative impulse of our individual life. Even this creative impulse is but a part of the impulse of life as a whole and so is not the current itself, but the current already bearing with it much of its congealed substance. The course of an individual's experience, however, must be still less fluid and creative, for it is constrained by the limitations of practical life. Perfect freedom of self-creation can never belong to the individual; this could only be found in coincidence with the principle of all life. But, relatively to ourselves, we are free in the measure in which we express our deeper personality. From the point of view of this distinction between character and personality, actions expressing our character would not in the same way be called free; they would be so in the measure in which this character was imbued with the original creative impulse of our deeper selves.

Bergson defines a spiritual force as a creative one, one that draws from itself more than it contains.<sup>3</sup> Thus the more deeply we coincide with the spiritual force which is in us, the more do we really create ourselves. Doubtless such creations are of form rather than of matter, for we have already seen that the matter of particular creations is already there and does not depend upon us. Its particular form of organization, however, is our own work, and in it we reach fuller realization of what was before latent in the tendency of our personality.

Joy, we saw, might be taken as expressing the triumph of life and so indicating its direction and the achievement of its purpose of creation. The form of creation that all men alike are capable of at all times is "the creation of self by self,"<sup>4</sup> the attempt to develop the deeper self in the formation of a character expressing it as nearly as is possible. We may even

<sup>1</sup>Donn. imméd., p. 182, note 1.

<sup>2</sup>Bergson himself does not make this distinction, though it seems implied in *Le rire*, p. 153, when he speaks of character in the sense of what is ready-made in us; that which functions automatically and repeats itself.

<sup>3</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 231, and *Life and Consciousness*, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup>*Life and Consciousness*, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, p. 42.

suppose, Bergson thinks, that "the passage of consciousness through matter is destined to bring to precision, in the form of distinct personalities, tendencies or potentialities which were at first mingled, and also to test their force, whilst at the same time increasing it by an effort of self-creation."<sup>1</sup> Every other species of living beings corresponds to a special form of the arrest of this principle of life which, in man, has succeeded, at least partially, and can manifest itself almost freely in human personalities.

Before turning to Bergson's world-vision, the manifestation of the creative force in all life, let us dwell for a moment longer on one aspect of personality. Each human personality is, in its most real self, its inmost core, part of the principle of life. Bergson as we have seen, though implying this, does not emphasize it. Accordingly, in this union with the principle of life, however partial it may be, we are placed in sympathetic communication with all living beings and more particularly with those nearest ourselves, with our fellow-men.

Bergson, however, does not deal with human society in any but its superficial aspect as united by a common practical interest. The further development of a theory of society based upon his views will be left for the next chapter. At present, we are dealing with the individual personality. It is, however, necessary to ask here what, in Bergson's treatment of the individual, has led to his lack of emphasis on the underlying bond of sympathy between human beings.

The word "intellectual" is repeatedly used where "mental" would seem more fully to express Bergson's meaning. Clearly, the word intellect should be confined to the particular meaning Bergson is so anxious to assign to it. Not that there is any real confusion here, but to call intuition "intellectual sympathy" at least draws the attention from intuition as anything more than a form of knowledge. Bergson has doubtless dwelt much on this knowing aspect of intuition, owing to the fact that his starting-point is a return to experience before experience has been contaminated by being refracted through the forms of intellect. Of course intuition is knowledge, but it is the knowledge immanent in action. Even as a form of knowledge, we have seen how the intuition of duration does not shut us up within ourselves. Just as a consciousness sympathizing, say, with the color orange, would feel itself in continuity with yellow or red and even with the whole spectrum, so we are put into communication with durations of greater or less intensity than our own and can seize them as, in a sense, internal to us.<sup>2</sup> In our own most superficial ex-

<sup>1</sup>Id., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, p. 25.



perience we can get a hint of what the scattering and relaxing of duration may be, and can have some idea of the limit to which matter tends, not to a mathematical multiplicity of moments, but to a continuity of nearly homogeneous vibration. On the other hand, as we plunge deeper into pure duration, we can see the possibility of an infinite tenseness, an eternity, not of death where duration is emptied of all its mobility, but a living and moving eternity in which our duration would be held as we hold the vibrations of matter in our sensation of it.

But must not intuition place us in even closer connection with our fellows—they whose tensions of duration are most nearly our own? It is here that the laying of emphasis more particularly on intuition as knowledge seems to have contributed to overlooking its nature as sympathetic in the ordinary sense of the term. In intuition, self-coincidence is so important that Bergson has been led to lay all his emphasis on the isolated individual without apparently noticing that, involved in this very thing, there is also possible some degree of coincidence with other selves. From common action we obtain common experience and common knowledge. So far as this action has as its end the conquest of the material environment and the ordinary affairs of practical life, the common experience may be only superficial. But, even so, just in the very fact of action in common, there is generated a certain sympathy, for intuition has all degrees and is immanent in all action. But the more the real personalities of those acting are involved, the deeper this intuitive sympathy must become and, from intuition as immanent in common action, a common fund of intuition as knowledge is derived. In so far as we really live in common with another, the two personalities can to that extent interpenetrate.

Bergson himself hopes that an intuitive philosophy will finally bring all philosophers to agreement. Here then would be a common seizing of intuitions that have ideas and concepts as their expression. These intuitions, however, would only be held as true in so far as they correspond to men's experience. It would be the moving impulse that would be assented to rather than its expression.<sup>1</sup> Thus human beings can unite in following some directions of reality. There is possible a certain coincidence between the impulses of their own lives. Bergson says, however, that "souls cannot penetrate into each other."<sup>2</sup> Absolutely they cannot, for they are qualitatively different, but to some extent they should be able to, for their essence is the same, they are closely allied tenden-

<sup>1</sup>Bergson himself always attempts to reach the core of intuition in the thought of any philosopher he is dealing with.

<sup>2</sup>*Le rire*, p. 170.

cies of one life-force.<sup>1</sup> This point is insisted on, for it will be found of importance in the view we take, not only of the individual, but of society and of the principle of life.

We further differentiate ourselves from other selves, of course, by the very fact of the development of our own personalities. But in this development again our relation to other selves plays a large part. The greater part of the ethical significance of personality lies, as will be later seen, in this relationship.

There are, then, the two processes; differentiation from others and, at the same time, interpenetration through sympathy. There cannot be an absolute coincidence in any state; still, the deeper the feeling, the more does it tinge all the states of consciousness. By successive contacts, also, a fund of deep experience can be built up in which individuals may share, and intuitive sympathy may in this way become more and more facilitated between them. In such sympathy our own personality is reinforced, is drawn nearer to the principle of life in which we all share, and which is the innermost reality of our beings. This explains the depth of joy generated in such experience; we are led beyond ourselves and joined more closely to the creative force of all life. The more the "melody" of our internal life is brought into harmony with the melodies of the lives of others, the better do they both harmonize in the music of the whole.

#### CREATIVE EVOLUTION.<sup>2</sup>

The time has now come when we must turn to the manifestation of the creative force in all life, and, indeed, in all things.

All through, duration has been the starting-point and has furnished the clue to any examination of the facts. Not only is duration the "stuff" of the individual consciousness, but all things considered as a continuity of concrete movement, and so prolonging the past in the present, must also be regarded as having duration. The independent objects of our perception and the systems isolated by science may be treated for practical purposes as without duration. But, although matter has a tendency to form such objects and systems, this is only a

<sup>1</sup>In a very recent address, Bergson seems to adopt this view. He remarks that if consciousness is only partly attached to the body one may suppose that each consciousness is not strictly separated from all others. "It is very possible," he says, "that between different personalities there ceaselessly take place exchanges, comparable to the phenomena of endosmosis. Presidential Address, Proc. of the Soc. for Psych. Res., vol. xxvi, pp. 475-476.

<sup>2</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, passim.

tendency and is never completed. We can attribute duration to such objects and systems also, provided they are reintegrated in the whole. Duration, then, is immanent in the universe, and it means creation, at least in form, of the new and unforeseen.

To seek to trace the manifestation of such creation through the forms of life is the business of evolutionary theory. In particular it is of importance to see how intellect has gradually been formed along the line of evolution culminating in man. Its legitimate use and its limitations thus become more apparent. If this line of evolution were the only one, the attempt to seize the nature of life would be fruitless, for intellect is just one particular manifestation of the creative force which has been formed under a particular set of circumstances. In the evolution of man many tendencies incompatible with it have had to be abandoned. It is true that in us, too, there are traces of a wider consciousness than is involved in intellect. But they are vague and fleeting in comparison with the clear-cut precision of intellect. To gain a fuller knowledge of these, it is necessary to see them as they are manifested on other lines of evolution. For other forms of consciousness have been developed along other lines, and although these have not freed themselves from restraints as well as has the human intellect, yet they too express something immanent and essential to the evolutionary movement. If their nature can be grasped and they can be fused with intellect, we shall gain more adequate knowledge as to the form of consciousness which is more nearly co-extensive with life and more capable of obtaining an integral, though fleeting vision of it.

This is only to insist, in another way, on the necessity of true empiricism. A theory of knowledge is the first thing necessary, for, without it, we are in danger of taking experience merely as superficial, as already inflected through the forms of intellect in the direction of practical action. False evolutionism and empiricism do not actually follow reality in its generation and in its growth. They take reality already divided by practical needs, instead of seeking to find how it comes thus to be divided. Bergson, on the contrary, proposes to find how intellect has gradually adopted its plan of structure and matter its forms of subdivision. In doing this, he is but applying his methods to the essential facts of evolution. As always, he insists that philosophy is a collective and progressive growth.

Let us turn first to the consideration of living organisms in general. Unlike material objects, their independence is natural; but their isolation is not complete, they too being united to the rest of the whole. They have a tendency towards forming individuals, a tendency which, like all tendencies implied in

life, admits of all degrees of realization. The essential characteristic of living organisms, however, is that they have duration; they develop and grow old through an indivisible and perpetual change of form. There is an uninterrupted continuity of evolution, a continual persistence of past in present. At certain moments and in certain places, a current of life has had its birth. Traversing the organisms it has formed, and passing from generation to generation, it is divided into species and scattered among individuals without losing its force; indeed, being rather intensified as it advances. Bergson thinks that, even if Weissmann's theory of the continuity of the germ plasm is incorrect, there must at least be continuity of genetic energy. This energy expends itself in giving the impulse to embryonic life and then, being held in reserve in the new sexual elements, again awaits its time. Life appears as a current pressing on from germ to germ by means of the developed organism which, from this point of view, seems to be a mere outgrowth. The essential thing is the continuity of progress bearing along each individual for the comparatively short time it has to live. And so the evolution of life appears as a continuous creation of much the same nature as the evolution of an individual consciousness. The past, pressing against the present, makes new forms spring forth incommensurable with their antecedents. Of course the appearance of any new species is due to exact causes by which it can later be explained, but it could not have been foreseen. This is true of individuals too. Even apparently sudden changes have been ripening through many generations, in each of which the change was too slight to be apparent. Bergson insists that living beings are not comparable to the artificial systems cut out by science. An organism is, it is true, a kind of mechanism, and, in organic life, an increasing number of physico-chemical phenomena will always be found. But these will never furnish the key to life; they cannot have hold on the really living, for, in the lowest manifestations of life, there are the traces of consciousness. Mechanistic explanations hold merely for phenomena which repeat themselves, and this is the case only in artificially isolated systems, that is, in those having no true duration. But Bergson does not, on the other hand, hold that evolution follows a preconceived plan. For, in such extreme teleology, there is no real creation, nothing unforeseen; once more, there is no true duration. As a matter of fact, both mechanism and the extreme form of teleology are simply intellectual views derived from human methods of work. A plan is proposed, and then we must pass to the details whereby we may realize it. Teleology is, however, a more flexible hypothesis than mechanism, which must be taken or left as a whole; the former admits of degrees, and Bergson's



view is nearer teleology than mechanism, though it goes beyond it.

In one sense, there is harmony, though imperfect, in the organized world. The many and striking discords are due to the fact that each individual and each species retains only a certain impulse from the whole initial creative energy of life. This it tends to use solely in its own interest, and life thus appears as incessant conflict between species and individuals. But the original impulse was common to all; and the tendencies, which when developed prove so antagonistic to one another, were initially complementary. Harmony exists rather at the start of life than as it advances, and consists in an identical impulse rather than in a common end. Of course, in looking backward, the direction of life can be traced and it will appear as though it were attaining an end. Psychological explanations are the best, but, according to Bergson, they should only be applied in retrospect, not in anticipation of the future.

Life is creative; in what it produces, it goes beyond itself, and its path is not given in advance. It is from its beginnings the continuation of one and the same impulse which is divided between the different lines of evolution and the individuals in each. Through this series of creations something has evolved, and tendencies have become dissociated which could not grow beyond a certain point without becoming incompatible. But if life shares in the nature of conscious activity, all these divergent lines must retain something in common, for it is still the original impulse of the whole which is contained in the parts. Bergson feels that his view is substantiated if life has, by dissimilar means and on divergent lines, created certain similar apparatuses. The greater this complexity and the more divergent the lines on which they are found, the greater will be the weight of such evidence. He takes the example of the eye where enormous complexity of parts is joined to unity of function. How is it that the eye of a vertebrate is similar to that of a mollusc? The various well-known theories of variation and adaptation whereby such a fact has so far been explained are taken up in turn.<sup>1</sup> Each of these theories applies to a certain range of facts, Bergson concedes, but, as hypotheses to account for the formation of the eye on different lines of evolution, he finds them totally inadequate; they are but partial views of a reality going beyond all of them. The neo-Darwinians are right in saying that the essential causes of variation are differences inherent in the germ, but Bergson cannot agree that such differences are purely individual and accidental. They are, he holds, the development of an impulsion passing

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., pp. 60-92.

from germ to germ; they are not accidental, but can appear at the same time and in the same form in all, or at least in many, representatives of a species. The variations of different characteristics are pursued, generation after generation, in a definite though not a determined direction. There is a continual creation of form. Of course indetermination is not complete here, but the main point is that a combination of physical and chemical forces is not sufficient to ensure the result obtained. That some mental cause must be involved, is the strong point of the neo-Lamarckians. Such a cause must, however, be deeper than the conscious effort of the individual. Again, the most that can be said for the transmission of acquired characteristics is, Bergson thinks, that it may take place in exceptional circumstances. It is not the rule. The effort which, Bergson believes, must be involved, is not only deeper than individual effort, but it is more independent of circumstances and inherent in the germs of a greater number of individuals in the same species; only so is it assured of transmission.

The original impulse of life, in fact, is the underlying cause of variations, in any case of those which are regularly transmitted and create new species. In general, when species begin to diverge, their differences become more and more accentuated with further development; still, there must be definite points in which they evolve identically, in that they are products of a common impulse. An example of such similar development is the eye. The eye is, in truth, the simple act of vision, and the cells into which we can divide it are the juxtaposed symbols whereby our senses and the intellect represent it as a mosaic.

Referring once more to his general example of motion, Bergson says that the formation of an eye by nature is an act analogous to that of the raising of a hand. The simple action is automatically divided into an infinity of elements which are found to be coördinated by the same idea, just as, from the motion of the hand, there are derived an infinity of points coördinated by the same equation. Organization and human manufacture are very different. The former starts from the one and from this the many can be derived; it has something explosive in it, and requires only a minimum of matter and space, as though the organizing forces entered them regretfully. Manufacture, on the other hand, proceeds from the many to the one; the more matter it has at its disposal, the more efficient it can be. In its products, there is found exactly what was put into them. It is perfectly legitimate for science to proceed, as it must needs do, as though organization were identical with manufacture. The instrument of science is, we have seen, the intellect, and, unless it considered living bodies

from this point of view, it could have no hold on them. But it only furnishes us with the means of acting on them, and in no way reveals their fundamental reality.

The whole of organized nature represents all the work of organization, but, in this case, the materiality of the machine does not really correspond to the means employed; it represents rather the obstacles overcome, and is thus a negative rather than a positive reality. Vision is a power which should attain endless things which we do not perceive. But, as we have seen, such vision would not be useful to us. We need only see the objects on which we can act, and so our vision is limited and directed along certain channels. Our visual apparatus symbolizes the work of canalization. To illustrate this the better, Bergson once more uses his familiar analogy of the motion of the hand, but, this time, pictures the hand as pressing through iron filings. At the moment motion is stopped, the iron filings are juxtaposed and coordinated in the determined form of the hand and part of the arm. The reason for this is an indivisible motion, expressed only negatively by the iron filings. The order of the coordinated elements would be necessary and perfect at whatever stage the motion halted. To search among the cells of the eye for the reason for their marvelous order is like seeking among the iron filings the cause of their arrangement. The progress in vision, as in any other power, is implied in the very movement of the original impulse of life. Whenever a power has attained the same intensity, its instrument will manifest the same complexity of structure.

What we perceive of the whole evolutionary movement is but some scattered fragments, as it were, of an explosion, whose original fragments have from time to time again exploded. Starting with this idea Bergson's object is to get back to the original movement. This fragmentation of life he explains by two causes. The resistances due to matter furnish one of these, while a still more potent cause is to be found in the unstable equilibrium of the tendencies inherent in life. To overcome the resistance of matter, life at first seems to have insinuated itself into it, adopting its habits in order that it might gradually draw matter into another path. It is due to this fact that it is often hard to distinguish the most elementary forms of life from chemical and physical forces. They are, in any case, of extreme simplicity.

Owing to the impulsion of life, these earlier forms very likely sought to grow as much as possible, but matter soon attains its limit of expansion. The underlying cause for this is to be found in the fact that life is a tendency and a tendency must develop like a sheaf. The divergent directions of growth implied in any tendency become incompatible with one another,

and must separate if they are to attain development. What Bergson is accordingly seeking to do is to trace the branching out and development of these various tendencies as illustrated in the different lines of evolution. By once more combining these dissociated tendencies, an imitation at least should be obtained of the indivisible moving principle of their impulsion. There has been progress in the sense of a continued advance in the general direction determined by the first impulsion, but this has really been accomplished only on two or three of the great lines of evolution along which are found the higher and more complex forms of life. All these manifestations of life contain, in a latent, virtual state, the essential characteristics of the greater number of other lines of development. There is not a clear-cut division of tendencies among them. They are to be distinguished rather by the preponderance of some particular tendency.

Considering first the great cleavage between the animal and vegetable kingdom, their methods of feeding are at once found to distinguish them. Plants have the power of creating organic matter from the mineral elements which they draw directly from earth, air or water. Animals, on the other hand, cannot seize such elements unless they are already fixed in some organic substance, whether in plants or in other animals which, in their turn, have gained their nourishment from plants. Owing to the fact that animals must go in search of their food, they are necessarily mobile, while plants remain stationary. The relation between mobility and consciousness has already been touched upon. In the measure in which it moves freely, the most rudimentary organism is already conscious.

Now, neither mobility, consciousness nor choice have, as their necessary condition, a nervous system. This, as we have seen directs along certain channels and carries to greater intensities the rudimentary, vague activity, which is diffused through any mass of organic substance—the undecided, and thus already vaguely conscious, reaction from which both reflex and voluntary reactions take their rise. Plants in general would thus be unconscious. To find traces of consciousness in plants, it is necessary to go as low down in the scale as possible and to take those forms which, as it were, still hesitate between being animals and plants. In the animal kingdom, on the other hand, sensibility and consciousness are continually reaching higher stages of development as there is rise in the evolutionary scale. The tendencies distinguishing these two kingdoms are not, however, mutually exclusive and they co-exist both in animals and plants, the difference being in their accentuation.

Life is essentially the effort to graft onto the necessity of



physical forces as much indetermination as possible; it cannot create energy, and thus this effort must aim at using the energy it finds at its disposal to the best possible advantage. To do this, it must obtain from matter stores of potential energy, which can be discharged in actions at any moment. It is only the power of discharge that organic life possesses, but this is obviously the more effective the greater the amount of energy thus released. The sun is the greatest source of energy for the earth, and the problem becomes that of finding provisional stores of energy at the earth's surface. Life probably at first tended to obtain at the same time the making of such stores and their utilization; in any case the divergent development of the vegetable and animal kingdoms is due to the division of these functions. Since the making of the explosive is only the means to an end, it is evident that animals rather than plants indicate the fundamental direction of life.

Among the divergent developments to which the general impulse of life gives birth, some continue indefinitely, while others soon reach the end of their evolution. These latter, Bergson thinks, do not proceed directly from the original tendency but from one of its offshoots. A really elementary tendency is characterized by the fact that, in it, there is still visible the trace of what was contained in the original tendency of which it is but one direction. For the elementary directions of the original tendency are really comparable to mental states each of which virtually encloses all the personality to which it belongs. In the analysis of a tendency through its development, all that is not incompatible with its special direction is preserved and also developed as far as possible. Probably certain striking analogies between plants and animals are due to this cause. Plants, deadened through their absorption in the means to an end, present many characteristics which are not in any way essential to their function. In animals, these same characteristics are found leading to their development towards higher forms.

It is, of course, the evolution of animals which it is important to follow. In the animal, everything converges on action. Where there is a nervous system, with sense organs and motor apparatuses, it seems as though its support were the chief function of the rest of the body. The latter prepares, in order to transmit to it at any point, the forces it sets at liberty by a kind of explosion. The nervous system, as we saw, is a reservoir of indetermination, and since life is ever seeking to create, the essential of the vital impulse seems to have passed to the formation of that most successful instrument of creation.

The vital impulse of evolution is evidently limited and there is striking disproportion between the effort and the result obtained. As a rule, it seems to have been arrested, absorbed

and paralyzed by the transient material forms manifesting it. Even in its most perfect forms, it is still at the mercy of matter. Our freedom, in the very motions that affirm it, creates habits which stifle it, unless incessant effort is made.

The underlying cause of this is that life in itself is mobility, but its different manifestations do not willingly accept this mobility. Constantly they seek to slacken it. Evolution advances, but each particular form would rather stand still, treating itself as the end rather than the means, and having no realization that it is but the path whereby the essential motion of life is transmitted. Each species, forgetful of all others, half asleep, fashions itself in view of the easiest exploitation of the immediate environment, so that it often turns its back on the direction in which it was initially impelled in its creation. Although each new species is, in a sense, a success obtained by life, yet failure may be said to be the rule from the point of view of the direction of the great effort of the creative force of life.

Of the four great lines of animal evolution, the echinoderms and molluscs have come to a standstill. Only in the arthropods and vertebrates has the force of life developed at all freely. At the very beginning of their evolution animals seem to run the danger of imprisonment in more or less hard shells, this hindering and often paralyzing their activity. In order not to be devoured, self-defence was necessary, and this was the easiest way. But, in the evolution of life, the greatest success seems to attend those taking the greatest risk. The animal enclosed in a shell is condemned to somnolence, and the two great lines of evolution which thus renounced their freedom of activity relapsed into torpor. On the two more successful lines, the development has been above all of the nervous system, but on the one line this has been towards instinct, best exemplified in the bees and ants, while on the other line, culminating in man, intellect has reached its highest level. Vegetative torpor, instinct and intellect are thus seen to be the interpenetrating forms of consciousness in the vital impulse of both plants and animals.

Instinct and intellect are primarily the instruments of action on matter. The first distinct evidence of intellect is in the making of artificial tools, particularly those whereby others can in turn be made. Instinct, on the other hand, is the capacity for using organized tools which form part of the organism itself. Thus instinct, prolonging organization itself, is exact, but specialized and limited to definite objects. Intellect has less perfect instruments, but the extension of its powers is unlimited. New functions are continually called forth, and an indefinite field is opened to the activity of its possessor.

The limited force of life seems to have had to choose between

these different forms. Intellect has more need of instinct than has the latter of intellect, for a high form of organization is needed before there can be the power of fashioning matter, and this is only reached through instinct. While in the arthropods evolution has evidently developed towards instinct, in nearly all the vertebrates instinct is found as the substratum of mental activity with intellect aspiring, as it were, to supplant this. Only in man does intellect really take possession of itself, and, in the very insufficiency of the natural means of defence and support at man's disposal, it asserts its triumph.

While knowledge of the intellect is generally accompanied by consciousness, instinct, as a rule, is unconscious, in that representation is quenched by immediate action. It is an acted knowledge. Intellect is ordinarily used when obstacles are encountered, when there is need, when there is a disproportion between representation and action. Further, each new satisfaction creates a new need. The greater the hesitation between possible lines of conduct the more intense is consciousness. The knowledge reached by intellect has a great range of extension, but its forms are derived from the forms of human action on matter. It is an external, empty knowledge and can never reveal the essence of its object. Instinct has this power, for it continues in the direction of the creative force of life; but it cannot seek objects beyond those to which its attention is naturally riveted. If, once having reached its object, it could reflect on and become conscious of itself, it would give us the key to vital operations, just as a developed intellect introduces us into matter. Intuition—which, as we have seen, is instinct become disinterested and self-conscious—should lead us to the heart of life.

The facts which have been outlined make it all the more evident that the life-force must be compared to a consciousness, or to something very similar to it. Through each advance in the development of the nerve-centers, this consciousness can pass more freely. It is true that consciousness is the instrument of action, but it is even nearer the facts to say that action is *its* instrument; the complications of actions and their mutual interference and consequent holding of one another in check, is the only means whereby consciousness, previously imprisoned, has reached its liberation. Everything makes it appear as though a large current of consciousness, bearing in it a multitude of interpenetrating potentialities, had entered matter, leading it to organization, but, at the same time, being indefinitely hindered and divided by matter. In two ways it may awake to awareness of itself; either by fixing its attention on its own motion or on the matter it traverses; it thus turns either towards intuition or intellect. In the former direction, consciousness has been so hard-pressed that intuition has

practically been condensed into instinct, which can only vaguely grasp a small portion of the motion of life. But, once intellect is freed and has taken possession of its own domain, it should be capable of turning round and revealing the virtualities of intuition asleep beside it in the human consciousness.

In theory it may seem absurd to wish to know other than intellectually, and yet there is a vague fringe round conceptual thought; to get beyond this nucleus, we must plunge into the substance at whose expense this is formed. By an effort of will, we can go beyond intellect and reach intuition, which will, in fleeting glimpses, reveal to us the essence of life.

But the time has come when some modification must be made as to matter. We have spoken all through of a current of life encountering a resisting matter. What is the source of matter; is it possible to trace its genesis? Matter as an indivisible whole has been seen to be a flux rather than a thing. We have seen how perception cuts out objects and intellect accentuates this tendency. Instinct has no need of perceiving objects, only qualities; but intellect, in its lowest form, always seeks to make matter act on matter, and always looks at it as composed of coëxistant and juxtaposed fragments. Intellect, as it advances, increasingly unfolds in space a matter which, though tending to spatiality, still is composed of mutually interpenetrating parts. "The more consciousness becomes intellectualized, the more matter becomes spatialized."<sup>1</sup> The forms of matter and intellect seem to be correlatively engendered, and it would seem that the same process must cut them from a substance containing them both. In the individual consciousness, we have already seen how differences of tension can produce differences in the interpenetration of our mental states. In our deepest experiences they are closely fused in a forward progress to free action; in our most superficial they are scattered and seem fixed, juxtaposed things. The latter state, pushed to its extreme in imagination, can make us see the limit to which matter tends, just as, the more deeply we plunge in duration, the closer are we to coincidence with the principle of life. At the basis, then, of "spirituality" on the one hand and "materiality" or "intellectuality" on the other there would seem to be two processes in opposed directions. The second of these processes can be reached by the simple interruption or slackening of the first. If the physical is just the interruption of the mental, it is more comprehensible how the mind is so at its ease in space. The latter would, in any case, have found space in things, but it could have represented space independently of this, if it had

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 206.



had imagination enough to push the interruption of its natural movement to its extreme limit of extension. It can be seen, too, in this case, why matter should accentuate its materiality when viewed by intellect. If it is the same interruption of the same movement which creates the intellectuality of mind and the materiality of things, the adaptation of mind and matter to one another is natural, and we could see how intellect and science, in dealing with matter, touch reality. For intellect and science, the order and complication of their object seem positive since they are turned in the same direction. But they deal only with the inverse of positive reality which is of a mental order.

Philosophy, then, as we have already seen, should not follow science; rather it should, as it were, push again up the slope descended by matter and so lead matter to its origins. It must then progressively seize the positive reality whose interruption and diminution is manifested in matter. This positive reality appears as the ceaseless advance to new creations, but its impulse has only to be slackened and it extends. In its extension, the mathematical order ruling the elements thus distinguished and the determinism relating them manifest simply the interruption of the creative force. Matter is a relaxation leading from inextension to extension, from creative liberty to necessity. Perfect life would be incessant change and creation, but matter leads to periodicity. Life in the world is change, but it advances through countless living beings, owing to obstacles inherent in its progress; it must spread itself out in their material forms which are each nearly repetitions of others. In so far as there is repetition the laws of science can apply, but they can have no real hold on the creation of new forms, which is being matured through these seemingly similar intermediaries.

Bergson calls the creative principle "consciousness," for want of a better word, but he does not mean the diminished consciousness which functions through each of us. Our consciousness is that of a particular living being in a certain part of space, and, while it is turned in the direction of its principle, it is incessantly retarded. It advances but must always be looking back. We can now see better why, in order that our consciousness may coincide with something of its principle, it must turn from the static and ready-made and turn in the direction of creation. We ourselves, moreover, are not the current itself and we can only seize within and live a creation of form. But where the creative current itself is interrupted, this gives a creation of matter. This does not mean that, at any moment, there is an increase of the number of atoms composing the material world; but it is quite admissible that a reality of a totally different order from atoms should grow

through sudden additions, and that each such addition should be symbolically represented by us, as a world formed of juxtaposed atoms. If it is objected that the creation of the universe must have been once for all, or that all matter is eternal, this is simply due to the fact that duration is not taken into account. Repugnance to the idea of creation is inrooted in the human mind. But from the point of view of concrete duration, the idea of creation becomes clearer; it is the same as growth.

Although our solar system is but part of a vast assemblage of solar systems, yet it is to some extent isolated by nature. The physical laws applying to our system cannot with any meaning be extended to all systems, for the universe is not ready-made; it is incessantly in the making, and new worlds are doubtless being born. In our own solar system it is, however, true that visible heterogeneous changes are gradually degenerating into invisible and homogeneous vibrations; it is as though energy and creative force were exhausting themselves and dying out. The whole matter seems an insoluble mystery from the point of view of physics, but, if the origin of it all is sought, not in space but in a tension which, by its very interruption, becomes increasingly extension, then it becomes clear that the physical is something which is wearing itself out. It is simply the suppression of another order, one that is in the making, and is thus advancing in the opposite direction to the physical processes. This reality is thus immaterial. Life always appears as the effort to press up through the matter which is, as it were, descending. Pure consciousness, and still more supra-consciousness, would be pure creative activity, but when consciousness is united to an organism, it is thereby subject to the general laws governing matter. It seems, however, to do all that is possible to free itself from them, but it cannot arrest material changes; it can only succeed in slackening them. The evolution of life continues the initial impulse of the creative force. Matter may be compared to the unmaking of a creative gesture of whose original motion vital activity is all that remains, still striving forward through that which is falling back.

We have every reason, also, to believe that things happen in the same way in other systems. We certainly know that all are not formed at the same time, for we can see nebulae in process of condensation. The principle of life, from such a point of view, has nothing of the ready-made; it is the center of continual springing forth, action increasing as it advances and creating in proportion to its progress. Life is motion, and matter is an inverse motion, each simple and indivisible in themselves. The entire series of living beings may be compared to a wave of life running through matter. There cannot be absolute creation in the impulsion of organic life, because of

the matter that is there, but there is the attempt to introduce as much liberty as possible into the necessity of matter. Life procures energy and then disposes of it, through matter made as supple as possible, in variable and unforeseen directions. We must remember that the life-force in our solar system is not unlimited; Bergson thinks it was "given once for all" in the initial act of creation.<sup>1</sup> It must not be held responsible, either, for the disunion and lack of harmony in the world, for they are owing to the obstacles it has had to overcome; it has been divided, arrested, forced back.

The only two processes necessitated by the creative force are the procuring and the dispensing of energy. On other planets, whose chemical composition and other conditions differ, different means may have been employed to attain these ends. Though the effect of the sensori-motor functions which we are familiar with must everywhere be the same, yet, to obtain this effect, very different forms of life may have arisen in other worlds. Life would seem possible everywhere where there is a descent of energy and where a force in the inverse direction can avail to slacken this descent; that is, doubtless, in all worlds. It would not even appear necessary that life should be concentrated in organisms; energy might be received and expended in variable directions through matter as yet un-solidified. Such may be the state of nebulae before their condensation, if it is true that life arises in the very act by whose interruption nebular matter appears.

Life is of a mental order and so, in itself, must consist of a confused multitude of interpenetrating terms, a mutual interference of endless tendencies. These are not dissociated until it comes into contact with matter, and it is then that it may be compared to an impulse. The tendency to individualization is, as we have seen, partly the work of matter and partly due to what life carries in it. But it is everywhere combated by the tendency to association, a return to the unity of the principle of life.

The consciousness which is the origin of life only becomes aware of itself when it can continue its original motion, that is, when creation is possible. Only in man—and in him owing to the structure of his brain—does it reach any real degree of freedom. In man alone has consciousness not been almost completely crushed by matter, in the paradoxical enterprise of creating, from the necessity of matter, an instrument of freedom. Man, in this sense, is the goal of evolution, though not in the sense of fulfilling a foreordained plan. The rest of the world was not made for him, and he himself would have been very different if different obstacles had been encountered in

<sup>1</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 276.

the path of his evolution. But man alone indefinitely continues the motion of life, though he does not carry with him all the potentialities of life, having, indeed, preserved little of most of its interpenetrating tendencies. These are represented on other lines of evolution, and, from this point of view, the organized world appears as the soil whence man has sprung and from which he has, by ridding himself of encumbrances, risen to heights whence an ever-widening horizon opens before him. In man, however, consciousness is above all intellectual when it should also have been intuitive. In a complete humanity, these two forms should attain their full development, and between such a humanity and our own, all degrees of blending of these forms of consciousness seem possible.

Through the generations of man, the current of life passes, creating individuals, and souls are thus continually created which, in a certain sense, have preëxisted. Consciousness must suffer from certain vicissitudes of the organism through which it manifests itself, and yet it is distinguished from them, and is, in itself, essentially free. When it reseizes itself in intuition, it finds that humanity is not isolated from the whole of nature. All humanity too, in space and time, is one, constituting, as Bergson forcibly describes it, "an immense army galloping beside, before and behind each of us, in a headlong charge, able to overcome all resistance and free us from many obstacles, perhaps even from death."<sup>1</sup>

There is no real dualism in Bergson's philosophy, though for purposes of clearness, it has often been necessary to narrow the meaning of his terms. Hence clear-cut distinctions have arisen. We must remember that all through he is trying to reach the fundamentals of experience, to free himself from the usual concepts and contrasts which have been the current coin of philosophy, and to tell what he has himself seen. His difficulty is accentuated by the fact that spatial images must be employed and they can never express the reality he is seeking to disclose. They can only help us to reach a position where we may make an effort to grasp it. That there is no dualism may have been evident from the account just given. The attempt has been made to follow the essentials of Bergson's own view. Starting from the point of contact of mind and matter in perception and developing each term, he has been able to discover something of their nature, and to see that all things can be expressed as a blending of these two terms which yet have a common origin. To insist upon this point, however, it may be well once more to sum up the whole situation. The view of reality as tensional must once more give the clue. Absolute beginnings and ends are without mean-

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 294.



ing to us immersed in experience as we are; still we can perhaps picture the formation of the universe.

Consciousness as pure activity and creative energy, enclosing in its tension endless potentialities, instead of continuing as such and unlimited, limits itself in the fact that it is manifested successively in a series of distinct creative acts. In each of these acts, a part of its force only is given, and this must be the cause of the limitation of the life-principle and its struggle in each of the worlds to which such creative acts give birth.<sup>1</sup> For in this very limitation of the life-principle must be the interruption of its pure activity which gives rise to a world, its tension gradually expanding in extension and tending towards solidified matter and, as a limit, towards space. All the universe, then, can be pictured as the intermingling of two directions; the direction of the life-force and a force retarding it. In conceived space we may be said to reach the limit of the purely static, but everywhere there is, in reality, an intermingling in varying proportions of the dynamic and the static, a resultant, as it were, of the two forces manifesting themselves, respectively, in duration and extension. There is continual, indivisible change, and this alone is real.

In each world, then, part of this creative energy is found. It manifests itself in the ascending current of those forces whose essence is duration, and which press forward against the descending current of the diminishing forces of matter. Either in a nebular form its career is just begun or, in dying worlds, matter is tending towards homogeneous vibrations like the quiverings of a body when life is nearly extinct. Organic life may have arisen in many worlds. On our own planet we can trace its gradual rise. It has been a compromise whereby the creative force of life has been able, not only gradually to slacken and disperse its energy, but to continue more and more actively in its original direction. Through the different lines of life it has pressed on, creating them as its tendencies dissociate, just as matter was originally created by the dissociation of the creative force in the formation of different world-systems. To overcome, or at least to struggle against the retarding influence of matter, it has had at every turn to adapt itself to it, organic life having had its beginning by the insinuation of life into matter. This is true not only of the race but of the individual. In the fusion of the parent cells, life once more finds material means at its disposal for the development of a new organism whereby it may attain fuller

<sup>1</sup>Bergson does not state this in so many words, but it would seem necessarily to be the case, from his general view of the nature of consciousness and of creation. If the whole of creative force remained so to speak, intact, it would not be limited and so there would not be any creation of worlds due to the interruption of its energy caused by this limitation.

expression or, at least, the vehicle of its further transmission. Each new life, though thus made capable of functioning through the fusion of germ cells, cannot be said to be contained in them. Part of the life-force latent in this world is thus furnished with an instrument whose matter, indeed, is given, but whose form it has the power of ceaselessly creating. It would appear, from such a point of view, that bodily aptitudes are probably inherited, matter having the tendency to repeat itself, while truly mental characteristics could hardly be so. There would, however, more probably be similarity between those parts of the life-force expressing themselves through parent and child than between others less closely associated.

Let us return, however, to the evolutionary process. In spite of many failures and arrests, it has been able, increasingly in some directions and preëminently in the line of evolution leading to man, to create organisms whose nervous systems have provided the vehicle for ever greater tensions of consciousness. The life-principle has thus become liberated to some extent from matter and can create more or less freely again. In such creation, it reawakes from the unconsciousness into which matter has plunged it; that is, it reseizes its own nature. In penetrating ever deeper into this, the consciousness of different living beings is drawn closer to their principle—the creative force of life not only in this world but of all reality. Such seizure of consciousness by itself is intuition, it is the knowledge which is immanent in the direction of life and of action. Intellect, on the other hand, serves the purpose of our action on matter and has therefore been spoken of throughout as turned in the opposite direction to intuition. But, once more, there is not a clear-cut dualism here. Intellect and intuition are both forms of consciousness; they are of the same substance and have a common origin. Intellect goes further in the direction already given in clear-cut sense perception, and this can be but a diminution of the fuller perception which is intuition.<sup>1</sup> Intellect gives in extension what intuition gives in a state of concentration. It is true that intellect, always applying as it does to the direction opposed to that of the life-force, can never represent the new but in terms of the old and only pictures the future as a rearrangement of the already given. It may thus seem to be completely retrospective. It is so when compared with the direction of pure creation. But life is a blending of the two directions, a forward impulse and the tendency to retard this, and, as a whole, it moves forward. In the same

<sup>1</sup>In intuition we seize duration and extension, though it is true that the deeper the intuition, the tenser the duration, with correspondingly less extension; still, these two always blend. Intellect can only understand space and homogeneous time; it has, as it were, to bring to a focus and make clear-cut the fuller data of perception.

way there is always a blending of intellect and intuition in our thought. In this sense, even our action on matter moves forward and intellect with it.

Life in the world appears as a process whereby freedom struggles up through matter. The forms freedom creates for itself solidify, just as matter originally did when cast off by the creative force of life. This is experience in the individual life and in the life of the world; a continued intermingling of experimenting with undergoing, of the active and the passive.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE.

But is this all that can be concluded as to the principle of life? What of its duration, and how far can it be said to have purpose? Once more let us turn to the individual consciousness, for it is by so doing that we can form the nearest approximation as to the nature of this principle. It is, as we have seen, essential to Bergson's thought to consider this principle, in human life and in the life of the world, as limited but not as relative. In seizing what is most fundamental in our own consciousness something of the nature of what may be called the supra-consciousness is also seized. Hence what follows is not mere argument from analogy; it is the attempt to reach an interpretation of facts of which we have only a partial view, on the basis of the hypothesis suggested by that part of those same facts of which we have most knowledge.

Spirituality and materiality have been seen everywhere to indicate, respectively, the direction of life and the form in which it is forced to manifest itself, when its activity meets with slackening or hindrance. In the individual and in the world there is always a compromise between mind and matter; sometimes matter has been made the instrument of mind, although, more often, as we have seen, mind has been robbed of most if not all of its freedom by matter. It will be in those cases where mind is best able to create new forms for the matter at its disposal that the direction of its tendency may best be seen. As we have already seen, Bergson considers that, in the human effort at creation and invention, we experience true causality. This should furnish the clue to causality in the world and in all world systems. We saw how, in human creation, there seemed always to be a dynamic scheme, and that the effort at creation consisted in realizing the potentialities held in interpenetration in such a scheme. This human creation consists in turning the dynamic scheme into images, in organizing the means to an ideal. In this process, the scheme may remain fixed, or it may alter from time to time, or, again, it may simply give the direction to be fol-

lowed—a direction which may be changed owing to the obstacles encountered, but which, even so, is not absolutely undecided. The evolution of life cannot, of course, be said to be the realization of a fixed plan: it does not manifest purpose in this sense. But purpose admits of other and more elastic meanings. It may mean an effort to realize inherent potentialities, an effort which manifests itself in some direction of development. Purpose, however, must always involve some conscious aim. The effort must be intended, even though the developments it gives rise to may be unforeseen. The vital impulse is, as Bergson says, “a principle of change rather than of conservation,” but it is a *principle*, not merely flux.<sup>1</sup> In the realization of the tendencies inherent in life a direction has been followed as far as possible. Its development could not have been foreseen, it is true, in any detail; but, at this stage of evolution when consciousness is reseizing itself in man, the direction of the life-principle is visible to us as an ideal which we may use to guide us. We can only dimly see in advance of us some stages of development which would seem the best to embody it, but this is enough for the direction of our efforts. It is enough, too, to allow us to feel that to some extent the vital impulse expresses purpose. But our solar system and all other systems manifest each but a part of the creative principle which is the source of all things. It is surely permissible to believe that in this creation of worlds we have a stage in the realization of the potentialities inherent in the very source of life, the supra-consciousness, and that this original development had a purpose which is manifested to us in limited form by the direction of the vital impulse in our world.

Everywhere life seems to repeat its methods, although at different levels; everywhere mind and matter play similar parts. From our study of the methods of life and of the interaction of mind and matter, we should be able to see something of the purpose of the supra-consciousness in the creation of matter. We shall be better able to discuss something of this purpose by first asking why Bergson has not more to say of it himself.

We have seen that intuition has been dealt with by Bergson as too exclusively a form of knowledge. Its more active side has not been dwelt on; also we saw how the common experience of mankind is only dealt with from the point of view of superficial experience. Even in this superficial experience man is not really divided from his fellowmen nor from the world around him. We have seen how his memory contracts the moments of the duration of the world around him and how, in perception, there is a certain coincidence between his consciousness and consciousness which is in the world, diluted

<sup>1</sup>Sur l'Evol. créat., *Rev. du mois*, vol. iv, p. 353.



in the vibrations of matter. But, as consciousness expresses itself through living beings, its duration becomes tenser till, between human beings, a much fuller sympathy is possible. Not only may intuition show itself in the form of being able to seize a rhythm of consciousness, but in what is almost a coincidence, at least for a moment or two, between the mental lives of human beings—a coincidence of will and feeling more than of thought.

But, if in plunging deep into ourselves we draw ever nearer the principle of life, by such sympathy with our fellowmen the union with this principle must be pushed still further. So far we have already seen. The question now confronts us as to whether this means coincidence only with the principle of life limited as it is in this world, or as expressed in all worlds, or, finally, as a principle immanent in all world systems, but not wholly expressed in them—a transcendent principle whose partial manifestation has been the creation of worlds.

We have seen that even from the point of view of matter, of the unmaking of the creative act forming each world system, no such system can be absolutely isolated from another, and that the whole has duration. But still more must there be the possibility of union between the action which is still in the making in each of these systems, the vital impulse of our own world and those impulses which may exist in other worlds. In pushing deeper into the principle of life, we must be drawn into union with this principle in all its manifestations. But here we reach the crucial question of the relation of such manifestations to their source. God must be pictured, according to Bergson, as a continuity of springing forth, the free center of the birth of worlds. But he goes on to say that, in each such system, the principle of life is limited, "being given once for all."<sup>1</sup> What is the exact meaning of this sentence? We can only interpret through what we know of life and consciousness in the world and in the individual. The individual, it is true, can create with the matter at his disposal artificial systems which certainly can be said to be given once for all; considered as isolated, they cannot have duration ascribed to them. But the individual, through his actions, is continually also creating himself, choosing among the potentialities of his person, and thus limiting himself. He is, of course, limited, in one sense, to the potentialities of his personality, that is, of that part of the life-principle which is in him, which gave the impulse to his life. But each individual life is not cut off from its source and further, as was suggested earlier, through active coincidence with the principle of life in any form, this impulse must gain reinforcement.

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 276.

Let us look at the same thing a stage further back. The principle of life in each world impresses on matter endless forms through which it seeks to ripen the potentialities in it. Having more than one individual form at its disposal, it can divide out and develop in many different lines; it has not to choose or to limit itself to the same extent as does the impulse of the individual life. But the matter of each world is given once for all in the act of its creation, the vital impulse in each world expresses the constraint of the life-principle by this matter, due to the limitation of itself. Again, this vital impulse in itself cannot be cut off from its source and, in so far as it can reach awareness of its nature, that is, as it once more becomes conscious of itself in each world system, it should be reinforced through coincidence with the other manifestations of the life-principle. Each of these manifestations, however, is more really a part of the source of them all than any creation of form, either by the vital impulse of a world or by the individual. For each world system is a creation not only of form but of matter, and from such a point of view is less cut off from its creator. It is from such a standpoint that the meaning of "given once for all" must be interpreted. Perhaps the relation of the supraconsciousness to the different world systems may be compared to that of a consciousness to its mental states. God is immanent in and yet transcendent to all worlds. But the deeper the experience of an individual, the more fully does he coincide, not only with the vital impulse of the world, but with the life-principle in all things, which yet, as their unexhausted source, goes beyond all things. "In" and "beyond" are, of course, but spatial images and, in one sense, have no meaning as they have just been applied. Images, however, must be used in speaking of any deeper realities; indeed, in dealing with anything but our most superficial experience, we can only seek to suggest and picture. All that has been done is to make a little clearer some parts of the picture Bergson has given of the life of the world and the individual. Some points have been added and others slightly modified, but they would seem to be in harmony, making a completer rather than a different picture.

This clearer vision of the oneness of the principle of life in all things seems to reinforce the view that, in the multiplicity of its manifestations, there must be purpose—not the purpose of a preconceived plan, but purpose in the sense of a principle of development. And thus the omissions that have been noted in Bergson's views are all correlated, and relative to them, too, is the fact that he does not deal with either ethics or religion.

We have already spoken of the relation of ethics to Bergson's general philosophic method and view of reality. The

more detailed account of his views which has been given in this chapter furnishes the material for a further discussion of the subject in Chapter III. Religion in itself is not the subject of this essay. However, in so far as Bergson's omission of ethics is in any way related to his view of God, religion must be discussed.

Turning, for the moment, from Bergson's view, we may say that ethics may and often does exist quite independently of religion in any form, but that morality is taken up into religion and becomes an essential part of it, just as soon as it is found to be involved in a union with God. The moral life is then not lived simply in and for itself, but as the best expression possible of our coincidence with the principle of all life. This principle must thus of necessity be held to be good, or rather our actions and lives are good in so far as they fulfill or express the will of God—in so far as we are the instruments of God. Man's personality cannot then be considered as containing no element of the divine in it, for we cannot be supposed to adjust ourselves to or live in accordance with what is absolutely diverse to our natures. Morality is thus the development of the divine in us in so far as is possible in our present experience. The moral life, however, is never the whole of religion from this point of view. Religion goes beyond it; man's ideal being that of union with God, and the moral life gaining its meaning from this ideal. Such a description of religion does not, of course, attempt to cover all forms of religion, particularly the lower forms, where man is trying to propitiate the unknown forces around him rather than seeking union with a principle more perfect than himself. But, wherever religion and the moral life are closely associated, this would seem to be a fairly accurate general account of their relation. The word God, too, is intentionally used somewhat vaguely. Even the highest forms of religion can only give symbolic pictures of God—pictures, however, which may be said to be true in so far as they are fruitful and bear good results in the moral and spiritual lives of those who are guided by them.

If the conclusions reached in the first chapter were correct as to the general place ethics should have in Bergson's view of life, it is very evident that ethics and religion should here be in the closest connection; that is, there would be absolute standards of ethics, and these would be the directions of the fulfilment of the principle of life.

Bergson has not attempted to give more than a philosophic method and its application to a number of important problems. He does not claim to have completed a system of philosophy. Moral experience and religious experience may be said to be the two most important forms of experience to which his

method has not been applied. Religion can no more be cut off from philosophy than can ethics, particularly from philosophy as Bergson understands the word. Nor, again, is a complete and detailed study of the forms and manifestations of religion and religious experience necessary in order to discover what general bearing Bergson's method and resulting views have on the subject of God and his relation to the forms of life. This section aims at suggesting what we seem justified in concluding here, though only in so far as these conclusions appear of importance in connection with a discussion of ethics.

We have seen that, in his later writings, Bergson seems to be turning more towards the ethical and religious sides of experience. He speaks, for instance, of the "aspirations of our moral nature," of the "ultimate reason of human life."<sup>1</sup> Still, he has not so far had much to say on this subject. In the principle of life such as it appears in *L'Evolution créatrice* we have but a dim and somewhat formal outline of a creator. We have already tried to suggest how this outline may be to some extent filled in, in keeping with Bergson's general method. It seems strange that a philosophic method based on intuition as the revealer of the deepest reality should not have dealt with ethics and religion, the two spheres where men have thought that, if intuition existed at all, it must be found.<sup>2</sup> That art, and particularly science should have furnished Bergson with the material makes his case all the stronger. In Chapter I we concluded that his attitude at first could not have been that of a man overwhelmingly interested in ethics. Nor could it have been the attitude of the preëminently religious man. In the former case he would probably have been led to deal with religion, but, in the latter, he must inevitably have had more to say of ethics. And so it happens that there are omissions in his view of the principle of life and man's relation to it, and also in his view of human society and the relation of man to man, and these omissions seem the very factors of the situation which are of most importance both to religion and to ethics.

We are now more prepared to realize the importance of the question as to whether the principle of life or the supra-consciousness has purpose. If there is no purpose, no direction in which this principle is seeking expression, religion loses all and ethics a large part of its meaning. For, as we have seen, religion, in any but its lowest forms, must consider God's pur-

<sup>1</sup>Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, pp. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup>Bergson does, however, speak of the fleeting intuitions of mankind on such subjects, natural impressions which he believes philosophic intuition may finally substantiate.



pose as good; and, in this case, morality gains its meaning as the fulfilment of this end. Ethics, of course, need have no background of belief in a purpose in life, but this would not seem to be the type of ethics in keeping with Bergson's philosophy.<sup>1</sup> By his insistence that there need be no fixed ideal in creation, Bergson almost makes it seem, at first sight, that his principle is simply one of creation aiming at nothing, taking no sides in the struggle. But though he gives no definite development of this purpose, there are indications everywhere of what it must be.

Let us first summarize the important function of matter; everywhere and always it has been seen to play a similar part. In the first place, matter gives in extension what was previously given in a tense, interpenetrating and concentrated form. It separates tendencies which were blended and confused in their undeveloped state, and thus helps to bring them to precision. In doing this, it has, at the same time, the effect of limiting the free activity of consciousness. It presents itself as an obstacle, for, once divided up, the different parts of consciousness in any of its manifestations lose contact with one another, take crystallized forms, and so renounce their coöperation with the whole. But, without any matter, there would have been no struggle. Effort can only be provoked when resistances are met with and when there are obstacles to be overcome. And so it is owing to matter that the force of life is tested and intensified. All forms of life in the world have struggled for the means of subsistence, but along the line of evolution leading to man the greatest effort has been made and the greatest result obtained. From these facts, Bergson feels that we are justified in concluding that the passage of consciousness through matter in our world was "destined to bring to precision, in the form of distinct personalities, tendencies or potentialities which were at first mingled . . . testing their force and increasing it by the effort at self-creation."<sup>2</sup> The purpose of each of these personalities should then be to create a definite character for himself, while the purpose expressed in the vital impulse is to develop its interpenetrating potentialities and the tendencies inherent in it. Now, as we have seen, this development of potentialities might have resulted very differently if different obstacles had been encountered on the path of evolution. Still, the purpose of the vital impulse in the world would be altered. We must

<sup>1</sup>In the *New York Times*, Feb. 22, 1914, it is reported that Bergson feels convinced that the individual cannot be guided by social ethics alone, and that the longing for religious experience—the feeling of relationship between the individual and the spiritual source of life—will remain and probably grow stronger as time goes on.

<sup>2</sup>Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, p. 43.

always remember, however, that the particular expressions of this purpose may not be aware that they are its manifestations. Those lines of evolution which followed too exclusively a secondary tendency, or even any one tendency, to too great an extreme have been passed by, as though life were struggling to reach the forms in which it could best realize itself. Even in man himself very partial success has been obtained. In him, it is true, consciousness is once more gaining self-possession, for he is comparatively free. But of many precious tendencies of life he has, at the most, retained mere traces. If, however, the deeper side of experience can be more fully developed, uniting intuition with intellect, and thus evolving a more perfect human society, it would seem that the purpose of the life-principle in this world would be expressed by this direction of development, accompanied by the increasing consciousness of it as the purpose of life. Life, it is true, creates incessantly, and we cannot see far ahead. But the purpose expressed in this world seems to have been one, we can see it emerging from the dim past, and, by coinciding with it, we shall be able to follow it indefinitely.

But since we can conclude something as to the purpose expressed in the vital impulse, why does Bergson stop short there? Cannot we also conclude something as to the purpose of creation of all worlds? Must it not be the same since, in all worlds, consciousness is of the same nature and, by its limitation, creates matter? Now, it is only in contact with matter that life is comparable to an impulse; in itself it is a multitude of interpenetrating tendencies. In that the supra-consciousness is the principle of freedom and yet the creator of matter, whereby all these tendencies are dissociated, first in different worlds and then in the forms of life in such worlds, may we not see as the general purpose of all creation, the self-development of the principle of life—the separation and development of its inherent potentialities? This is what matter accomplishes. The principle of life is developing a part of itself, some of its potentialities, in each world system and on through the forms of life, always attaining more precision and definition for these tendencies. And yet there must, as we have seen, always be union between all dissociated tendencies, as though the purpose of life were indeed their development but not their absolute division from one another. It is as though the development of the parts in a harmonious whole were its final aim.

That a part of the life-force goes to the creation of each world is, we suggested, the reason why it is limited in each world; the matter of each world being created once for all, though the developing vital impulse may intensify and reinforce itself in proportion as it frees itself and becomes con-

scious of its nature. We can now see that, without this limitation, there could have been no effort or struggle, for matter must express this limitation, being the diminution of pure activity. Through this limitation of itself, the principle of life thus works in the direction of its fullest development. The principle of life, Bergson says, is not responsible for the discord among its manifestations. The meaning of this, from a standpoint such as is here taken, can only be, that this is one of the unforeseen effects of matter, one of the accidents to which life has had to submit in its development. Matter has caused it to forget its purpose, to be divided so far that its parts are at war with one another, unconscious of their underlying union. But, at the same time, the principle of life is responsible for all the pain and discord in the world, in the sense that its development is obtained through its limitation and consequent struggle with matter. Separation and division result in pain, but without them there is no creation. And through pain, at least as attending effort, much may be gained; in any case, the difficulty which arises as to the pain in the world, when looked at from the religious point of view, that the principle and purpose of life must be good, is attenuated, when it is realized that the principle of life suffers the pain itself. It accepts, so to speak, suffering of all kinds as a necessary discipline—a concomitant of the development it is striving for. The particular manifestations of life do not realize this and do all in their power to escape suffering. Pain of any part of an organism was, as we saw, the powerless effort of a part to escape injury. But, on the other hand, suffering may be attended with joy, and joy is always the sign of triumph and so of fulfilment of the purpose of life.

The principle of life, then, though it has limited itself to reach its fullest realization, may, at the same time, be held to do so perfectly freely, and the religious consciousness must always believe that the struggle will gradually be won, and the realization of the purpose of God be effected.

We have so far, in this section, not touched upon Bergson's description of the principle of life as the concretion of all durations, that is, as a consciousness of an infinite degree of tenseness. It will be remembered that, through the tenseness of our own consciousness, in one of our moments, we are able to seize and thus to master long periods of the more diluted forms of consciousness. Bergson does not develop the bearing of this fact of different tensions of duration in connection with the relation of the principle of life to its manifestations. It is evident that here may be some clue as to the freedom of the life-principle in the development of its purpose, even though, from our point of view, it may seem necessarily constrained through the matter it has given itself.

The whole subject is, however, of such difficulty that we can only see a little way in any direction. In this particular matter it seems impossible to realize what may be indicated; at least, however, we can grasp that, in our own deepest experience, we are penetrating ever closer to this principle and, in coinciding more and more fully with it, we are increasingly free and are the better fulfilling the purpose of our lives.

The nature of the principle of life has now been suggested as far as seems legitimate. We have also seen what is the nature of the individual and his relation to the principle of life. We can now sum up what is involved in the moral life in so far as it concerns the relation of the individual to the life-principle. In general it is the coincidence we have just spoken of, the attempt to follow the purpose of the life-principle, which is the absolute standard of good. We saw that, in so far as this purpose is grasped, this would be through intuition, though its detailed carrying out must always require the instrumentality of intelligence. By going deeper and deeper into himself, man reaches closer to the whole principle of life, and, in doing so, the more fully develops his own personality, that part of the principle of life which he is. By doing good, man will gain in his knowledge of the good, and this increased vision should once more reinforce his conduct in the right direction. "If ye keep my words, ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free;" not only does this text express what has just been stated, but it even emphasizes that, through intuition and thus closer coincidence with the life-principle, we reach true freedom. Sin, from such a point of view, becomes the division of the human from the divine purpose, the parting with our freest self-expression. Instead of expending effort for lower ends, or simply not exerting effort at all, we must struggle for participation in the purpose which is expressing itself in part in our lives. In so doing, we are instruments of good and draw closer to the principle of life. The joy experienced in such union and its results are the sign that the purpose of life is being accomplished.

Here we have the basis of ethics. But the purpose of the principle of life is only fully expressed for us through human society. To coincide with this purpose becomes for us the working out of the good of society, considered, however, as a community of personalities, that is, of expressions of the principle of life. It is true that sympathy with the whole principle of life would cause us to include all forms of life in our regard. These must be seen, so far as possible, in relation to the whole, and treated accordingly, but it is evident that we are the most closely united to our fellowmen and that one human life cannot really be treated in isolation from others.

Bergson speaks of the possibility of all forms of human society between our own and that where intuition and intellect



should reach the fullest mutual development possible. In this latter form of society the fact that ethics must always sanction a blending of the tendencies to detachment and attachment, would gain its fullest meaning. Life has everywhere simultaneously the tendency towards individualization and the tendency towards association. This simply expresses the essential of the purpose of life, the development of potentialities, but always as parts of a harmonious whole. This harmony among the different tendencies of life and so between the manifestations of the life-principle has not so far been well fulfilled among living beings, even among human beings. Man, in so far as consciousness has re-seized itself in him, should be and is capable, however, of making this harmony his aspiration, and its attainment the guiding principle of his life. Life has always been obliged first to externalize itself in the conquest of its environment, before it has been able to deepen in awareness of its own direction. In the world, the material comes always, in this sense, before the spiritual. And so it has been with human society.

In Chapter III we shall see that Bergson really considers only one form of human society, but that, even in what he says on this subject, we can see the possibility of the development of a higher form in the direction of which it should be the aim of all to strive. In such an ideal society, there would be spiritual harmony through all parts realizing their essential unity and thus living in the light of St. Augustine's maxim: "love and do what you will." That the purpose of life is the development of some such society seems evident, although the details of such a development cannot of course be foretold, only the general direction. For man, therefore, as a member of human society, the good would be in following this direction. It will be from considering this ideal society as far as we can that the ethical implications of Bergson's philosophy will most readily be appreciated. Ethics, as was said, may be independent of religion, but we can now better see how, on Bergson's hypothesis, the two are related. Though the purpose of the principle of life gains its fullest meaning for us in human society, there should still be for us a relation to the principle of life in itself, as transcendent as well as immanent in its manifestations. All ethics must be in the light of the two great commandments "Love God and love thy neighbor" and these two are interdependent. The better a life, the more it fulfils its purpose, and to do this it must touch sympathetically the lives of others and draw nearer to the principle of life.

There are those who are wont to idealize their surroundings and to see only the pleasing aspects of life; optimists these are called, but such a standpoint must be seen to be utterly super-

ficial. There is also a superficial type of pessimism; there are those who can see no good in anything. These opposing points of view really have their origin in the fact that to control future experience all the hopeful signs of any situation should be picked out as indicating the direction in which a situation may be developed, and also the bad signs must be recognized in order that we may endeavor to react to and overcome them. Superficial optimism and pessimism result from the over-emphasis of one or other of these points of view. But the pessimist always sees deeper than the optimist. It is true that life in the world is essentially sad. Let us look at it merely from the standpoint of man's more practical superficial life. The world is gradually dying, and however great may be the material success of mankind, this must ultimately pass. Even if all shared in it, it is an insufficient ideal; no purpose of the material benefit of mankind is inspiring enough; a spiritual future must be included. Man continually demands more; the more fully and deeply he lives, the less is he satisfied with the life of this world. No extension of his own individual life could satisfy him under the conditions that here obtain. He craves the fulfilment of all that is deepest in him, that is, more perfect union with God. Life's sadness seems summed up in the words of the Gaelic proverb, "the end of all meetings, parting." It is true that this continues "the end of all striving, peace," but if this means the peace of oblivion, it only emphasizes the sadness of life; it cannot now inspire peace and it makes pessimism almost inevitable. And yet there is peace which can accompany even the hardest and most painful struggles of life. This peace is founded on the fact that real union attained between ourselves and the principle of life in itself or in our fellowmen cannot be broken.

Bergson, indeed, explicitly says that we are justified in believing in the survival of consciousness after death. As we saw, one of his finest passages pictures humanity as capable of overcoming death, and he elsewhere speaks of personalities being prepared in this world, "by the effort, which each is called on to make, for a higher form of existence."<sup>1</sup> This belief Bergson bases entirely on his view of the relation of the brain to the mind. Survival is not proved thereby, but it becomes a probability which should be capable of indefinite growth. He thinks that we can admit that in man, though perhaps in man alone, "consciousness pursues its path beyond this earthly life."<sup>1</sup> The souls of men which are ceaselessly being created all preëxisted in a certain sense; so did all parts of the principle of life, in all its manifestations. But the continuity of conscious internal life has been broken, and, in most

<sup>1</sup>Life and Consciousness, *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. x, pp. 42-43.

cases, life has become unconscious of itself and of its purpose. We cannot say what may be the fate of all the life imprisoned in matter. All we seem justified in concluding is that, where consciousness has taken possession of itself again, where a personality strives to be one with its source and principle, there is uninterrupted, indivisible continuity of conscious life, which is not broken by death. The purpose of the life-principle has here been attained in some degree, in the development of some of its potentialities. Fleeting intuitions have always affirmed survival after death, usually in the form of the continued existence of conscious personalities. It is true that in the ideal of Nirvana, absorption in the divine principle, in that it excludes need and future possibility, has been held to be also unconscious. Certainly where there is no practical experience to control, intellect is unnecessary. But our deepest experience is not intellectual, and this is recognized since intuitive knowledge is that usually ascribed to God. It is in this deepest experience that we must base our belief in the fulfilment of our hopes, that deepest experience which is here reached most readily perhaps in the sympathetic union with the life of another human being, for in this union we can the better realize our union with God. We can dimly picture the eternity of God as one of life and movement, always one and many and yet constantly changing in quality. For continually the interpenetrating potentialities, which were vague and confused, reunite themselves with it, as personalities developed in life's struggle.





## CHAPTER III.

### HUMAN SOCIETY AND ETHICS.

#### BERGSON'S CONCEPTION OF SOCIETY.<sup>1</sup>

Of all living beings, man has been the most successful in his conquest of the material environment. This we have seen to be due to his intellect, which, at the outset, manifested itself as the faculty for constructing tools, particularly those whereby other tools could be made. Mechanical invention was and always has been the sign of man's superiority, and its development has marked the direction of his progress. Still today the construction and use of artificial instruments is the center round which social activity must revolve. For man lives in society, and his activity, to be most effective, must be coöperative; in the manufacture of instruments, human intellects associate. Hence the necessity of communication by signs, that is, by a language adapted to the requirements of common life and making action possible. Language furnishes man with an artificial set of mechanisms whereby he can apply a limited number of signs to an unlimited number of special objects. It thus carries further the same utilitarian tendency which, we have seen, characterizes even our ordinary perception. In fact, in our perception of objects juxtaposed in space and external to us, we have the first step towards joint action and thus towards common life and language. So pressing are the exigencies of this practical social life, that it must usually be of more importance to us than our individual internal lives. In order that these too may enter the current of social life and find means of expression in language, we must represent the flow of our duration by means of distinct and clear-cut states. We must substitute for our personal feeling the common impersonal element of the impression felt in any given case by all society. These only are translatable into words. In this way arises the idea of homogeneous time which, as we have seen, is due to the refraction of duration through space, and is the extension in juxtaposed elements of the interpenetrating tension of our deeper experience. It is thus in the realms of superficial practical experience that human society first mani-

<sup>1</sup>Of importance in connection with this subject are the following: *Donn. imméd.*, pp. 97-105, 182; *Mat. et mém.*, p. 203; *Le rire*, passim; *Introd. mét.*, *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, pp. 26, 30; *L'Evol. créat.*, pp. 110, 150-152, 171-173.

fects common action; or, at least, we may say that it is above all the exigencies of such experience which render coöperation essential.

There are, of course, tendencies opposed to such coöperation. The progress towards a quieter, more coördinated social life has tended gradually to solidify the superficial crust of feelings and ideas, which cover and often stifle the deeper experience of men. But, under these useful acquisitions, there is still the possibility for each individual of a less superficial life. Among the deeper feelings of men, none are more violent than those excited by contact with their fellow men, the powerful attractions and repulsions which result in outbursts of passion. For the purpose of coördinated action many of these manifestations of the fundamental nature of its members are most dangerous to society. But those who, in mind and character, are least adapted for social life tend to be eliminated. Serious defects are often remedied or punished by natural causes.

Quite beyond this sphere of the actions and dispositions which, if allowed free play, would make social life impossible, there is another sphere. A man without serious defects of body, mind or character may live in society; but society demands more than this, it demands complete sociability; it is not satisfied that its members should only attend to the essentials of life and, for the rest, allow themselves to be ruled by habit. It is true that the social life we have so far been discussing is one based on a community of superficial experience, one where deeper individual experiences are ignored, if not discouraged. But even this superficial experience must not become too inflexible. The practical life served by it still demands a continual elasticity of body and mind and a constant effort of attention whereby the individual can adapt himself to the present situation. Any tendency on the part of one of the members of a society to ignore these demands and to render himself unsociable, by diverging from the common life of men, is instinctively regarded by society with suspicion. We thus have a sphere where even the tendencies antagonistic to the perfect equilibrium of society are checked, and this is effected by means of laughter. Society holds up to ridicule those of its members who appear comic to it.<sup>1</sup>

To substantiate this statement, let us mention some of the characteristics of laughter itself. In the first place, laughter is always provoked by something strictly human. If an animal or an inanimate object is laughed at, this is always due to the

<sup>1</sup>Bergson's theory of laughter as given in *Le rire*, in itself most ingenious, is here of great importance, since, in it, his view of society best reveals itself.

fact that it, in some way, recalls a human attitude or expression. Then, again, those that ridicule are always, in so doing, unsympathetic, or at least insensible to the feelings of their object. Laughter is incompatible with emotion and sympathy. Those who laugh, further, feel themselves to belong to a group, they keep in contact with others, and ridicule what, to their circle, seems comic. We thus see that society is the natural medium of laughter. One of the most potent causes of laughter, what may, indeed, be said to be at the root of the comic, is the appearance of rigidity and lack of suppleness. For it is thus that inattention to the demands of life most readily manifests itself. The rigidity of a machine rather than the flexible attention of a living being, whether manifested by mind, body or character, is always suspicious to society, for it is the symptom of waning activity, of inattention to the common life and so of isolation from society.

Such is Bergson's general view of laughter. He applies his hypothesis either directly or indirectly to many of the different manifestations of the comic. To follow this application in any detail is unnecessary to our present purpose, but there are many points of importance which are made clearer in connection with specific aspects of the comic. Some of these must now be given. We have already said that laughter corrects the tendency of our superficial experience to become overcrystallized; even though our action in common with others is of a practical nature, yet we must remain ourselves to some extent. This is well shown by the fact that we are always exposed to ridicule in so far as others may imitate us. We cannot be imitated while we remain really ourselves, but, where we function automatically, where we are most superficial, others can adopt the same attitude, or gestures. In the same way a disguised man comes to be comical. Many effects are comic in that they are related to those which can be deduced immediately from what we may call primarily comic effects. Disguise of all kinds may thus be comical. For instance, when we do not identify the ceremonious side of social life with the serious objects to which custom has attached it, it is bound to become laughable. It is, as it were, a disguise of society. Again, for the imagination of man, the soul always appears as the active, animating principle of the body and so, whenever the attention is turned from the soul to the materiality of the body, the effect is comic. The same principle may be expanded to cover the cases where the means take precedence of the end, indeed wherever life seems forgetting itself and turning its attention from the aims of society.

The characteristic which unites in itself all the attributes that go to make the very essence of the comic is, Bergson says, vanity. This is an admiration of self based on the admiration

we believe ourselves to have inspired in others; it has thus issued out of and is inseparable from social life, and is yet insupportable to society. It is in one way superficial and yet in another fundamental, for all the vices may minister to it and become the means of its satisfaction. All are conscious of a man's vanity except the man himself. So wide-spread is vanity, Bergson goes so far as to say, that no man is born truly modest.

The essentially ridiculous fault is thus vanity, and laughter is its unfailing and instantaneous remedy. Ridicule does not, of course, tend to produce real modesty, indeed, vanity often springs up again in some other form; but the desire of being truly modest may, in time, grow from the fear of being ridiculous. Laughter certainly is a useful means of correction, but Bergson thinks that it is in no sense benevolent. It is true that, at first, we may sympathize with the comic person; we associate ourselves with him in the absurd play of his ideas, for this is a rest from the tension of life; we, too, are willing to be lazy and to escape from the fatigue of living. Such sympathy, however, is but momentary; egotism and pride, if only slight, soon intervene, and we laugh. Laughter wishes to intimidate, to humiliate, and must thus produce a painful impression on the object of ridicule. Society would not work its revenge on the tendencies threatening it, if it were full of sympathy and kindliness. It would not attain its results if it did not utilize the malicious tendencies of men. In general, ridicule is useful, but it cannot even be said to be inspired by feelings of justice. It is not the result of reflection, but is an instinct of society. Through it, society is helped to obtain greater suppleness of adaptation from its members, the co-operation of all in the common life of man; but it aims simply at this general result, and cannot examine particular cases.

This end is pursued almost always unconsciously and, in many cases, without any regard to the moral aspect of the case. Rigidity and isolation are suspected by society; he who appears eccentric is exposed to laughter. The person ridiculed need not be in fault in the usual sense of the word. Indeed, an inflexible virtue is easier to ridicule than a supple vice. In this way, most of the greatest of mankind, those who have seen beyond the limitations of the society of their day, have been ridiculed, even if no worse fate has befallen them. For laughter is relative to the ideas, customs and prejudices of society. Bergson adds that, "to the honor of humanity, social and moral ideals do not differ essentially."<sup>1</sup> In order that this may be true, however, the meaning of the word society, as Bergson usually employs it, must be to some extent modified. Let us see just what is indicated as to the ideals of society,

<sup>1</sup>Le rire, p. 141.



as this word has been used so far in this chapter. In the first place, of course, those fundamental and serious defects of the body, mind and character which do not come within the sphere of laughter are antagonistic to social life. In so far as these must be condemned the social and moral certainly do not differ much. But, if these defects are eliminated, and men can live at all in common with their fellowmen, what is it that is further demanded of them by society? The equilibrium of the wills of its members, and the supple adaptation of each to the needs of practical life. Society decrees that each shall be able to play his own part in harmony with others in the work of the community, but with the deeper individual lives of its members it is not concerned. The ideals of this society are those dealing with the more superficial experience of man, and yet this must not become too superficial, for then the flexibility essential to the continuity of even practical human affairs would be lost. The term "ideal" must here be taken as a direction of effort for the most part unconscious. Still more unconscious, probably, are the indications, within this ideal of the coördinated practical life of society, which seem to hint that it is in itself inadequate and that the direction of social advance must be guided in view of some wider and more elastic principle. In the very fact that an extreme of superficial experience seems always to be censured by society, we may see, not only the necessity of keeping practical action efficient, but also the instinct which prevents society from settling down into a state of passive adaptation and inaction; the path is left open for its advance to some higher stage of development. In the fact that society further demands a certain continual self-consciousness on the part of its members and that it instinctively endeavors to correct any tendency to regard the material as other than the instrument of the mental, may we not see something of the direction of this advance? Must it not be towards a society in which, while nothing is sacrificed of needful practical efficiency, a deeper equilibrium is aimed at, that between the more real selves of its members awakened to fuller consciousness of themselves as free personalities?

But that this is not the aspect of society on which Bergson lays most stress is obvious. His very treatment of laughter offers a striking illustration of this. It would be quite beyond the scope of this essay to attempt to criticise Bergson's theory of laughter, but just as this theory was given so far as it seemed to be of use for getting at his view of society, so now, with the same end in view we may notice what constitutes an omission in it.

It is true that Bergson begins *Le rire* by stating that its subject is laughter provoked by the comic. The "meaning of the

comic" is, indeed, the sub-title of the book. But the point that seems significant is that Bergson has nowhere dealt with laughter as aroused in any other way. Pleasure and joy appear somewhat far removed from the spirit of ridicule, and sympathy, as we saw, is entirely excluded by it; and yet the manifestations of all these may take the form of laughter. Outside of the somewhat superficial sphere where laughter corrects, and within the sphere of the serious and the emotional, we may still find laughter. Although we do not ridicule one with whom we sympathize, yet his pleasure can make us smile or even laugh. What is the meaning of this? Possibly since laughter is a social function and thus always unites us to some of our fellows, it has become an accompaniment of other forms of union with them, not only of that in which we unite to ridicule an outsider from the group. Further, laughter is always pleasurable, possibly because it rests us from emotions and relaxes the tenseness of thought and will, and because in it instinct is followed; partly too, no doubt, in the association it gives us with our fellowmen. Pleasure may thus have come to have laughter as one of its characteristic manifestations. But such questions are beyond our competency. They have merely been mentioned to show that Bergson's preoccupation is with society as a community based on practical experience, and also that that part of the subject of laughter with which he has not dealt is precisely what should have gone to modify his somewhat restricted meaning of the word society.

It is true that the structure of man's senses, his intellect and ordinary modes of thought and even his science, deal with experience only in a more superficial form. But Bergson has all through insisted on the possibility of plunging deeper into reality, of joining intuition with intellect, philosophy with science. Still he speaks of the mind of man, in so far as it is "simply human," as being purely intellectual.<sup>1</sup> To seize the reality of things in their duration and mobility is for him more than human. Accordingly he says "philosophy must be an effort to transcend human conditions."<sup>1</sup> We must go back to experience before it has been deflected in the direction of our utility and become properly human experience. It is really a view of humanity which Bergson derives from his meaning of the word society. In one sense, of course, this is a question of terms, and yet, by a progressive transcending of their present limitations, human beings will not cease to be human; will they not rather be simply realizing more fully the potentialities of humanity? The broader sense of the word human seems justified in many ways by Bergson himself. Although in man consciousness is above all intellectual, and the life-

<sup>1</sup>Introd. mét., *Rev. de mét. et de mor.*, vol. xi, p. 30.

principle as manifested in human society seems so far to have exhausted most of its force in the conquest of the material environment, yet something of intuition has always been preserved. Once the intellect has conquered matter, the mind should be able to turn round and reveal the potentialities of intuition which are for the most part dormant within it. Once it has, in addition to the energy required in useful effort, a surplus of force, it can turn from the external world and reënter itself. Language with its extensible signs, which can be applied to ideas, greatly facilitates this self-conquest of the intellect. When it comes to perceive itself as the faculty of representation in general, it wants ideas of all objects, but, as we have seen, its procedure here is always that which has been of such practical importance to it in the external world. It cannot reach the reality of things. This intuition could do, and its opportunity arises through the setting free of the intellect. Intuition should complement intellect in the human being. The insistence on intuition as constituting a form of knowledge other than intellect is, of course, at the basis of Bergson's whole thought. His view of duration is the only more fundamental point. But this very view of duration with its tensional character has surely not been completed until carried out in its social implications; this is what has not been done. Doubtless human society lends itself to Bergson's description of it; the latter covers a large number of the facts. But, even so, there are symptoms of a more fundamental union among the members of society which seem to justify the view that, not only is a higher type of society possible, but that it would be based on a progressive recognition of the deeper aspects of human experience. In such a society, intuition would be fundamental, though intellect would always be instrumental in the practical affairs of mankind. Bergson, it is true, speaks of such a type of humanity as possible, but he does so vaguely and does not develop his thought any further in this direction.<sup>1</sup> This omission we have already seen to be connected with others.

Bergson does not give sufficient recognition to the interpenetration between the deeper experiences of human beings that should be made possible through intuition. We suggested that his starting point, the individual's consciousness of his own duration, may have contributed somewhat to his not dwelling on the underlying unity of humanity. It is true that he recognizes that each individual, in the measure in which he penetrates his inmost self and acts freely, coincides thereby with the principle of life. And it seems strange that, from this point of view, the idea of union with other men should

<sup>1</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, pp. 289-290.

not have been developed.<sup>1</sup> The standpoint from which intuition was first reached seems to have constituted something of a limitation throughout. We also saw how, in connection with the principle of life itself, Bergson stopped short of finding any purpose in the creation of worlds. This, too, seemed in some measure due to his not having followed out the full bearings of his own view of intuition. It can readily be seen that the recognition of the interpenetration of the deepest which is in men would lead to a view of a possible society such as has been suggested as complementary to the society Bergson speaks of. Obviously, that such a society should serve as the ideal in the development of the present form of society, might also have been suggested from the point of view of the fuller embodiment it gives to the direction of effort of the principle of life. But we have already dwelt at greater length on these points and have tried to show that they are complementary to one another. They have been repeated in order that, now that Bergson's conception of human society has been given, we may be able a little further to develop the view which would appear to complete it. We have had occasion to mention that many of the distinctions necessary for the first development of Bergson's thought have been softened in his later writings. This is true, too, in connection with his view of human society. In his first book there is no mean recognized between the purely internal and the purely practical and external; human society, when mentioned, is simply a conjunction of men for practical purposes. In *Le rire*, as we saw, only a slight advance on this view was to be found. But in his latest book, *L'Evolution créatrice*, there are indications of a recognition of humanity as potentially a sympathetic whole. His latest articles, though not explicitly dealing with society, give a more developed view of intuition and of the human personality. In so doing, they afford some justification for suggesting a higher form of society than that explicitly dealt with by Bergson.

#### A BROADER VIEW.

It is of the essence of duration to be one and yet multiple, and duration is the "stuff" of all things. In organic life the nature of its fundamental principle is manifested by the tendencies towards individualization and association. This Bergson, of course, recognizes, although the subject is not dealt with in much detail.<sup>2</sup> These two tendencies are antagonistic, but at the same time, complementary; everywhere

<sup>1</sup>See note (1), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, pp. 281-283.



the forms of life, drawn in these two directions, maintain a balance between them. It looks as if the higher organisms were born of an association of cells which function in harmony through a division of labor, but Bergson thinks that the facts probably are the reverse. The cells are formed by the individual through dissociation, the primary direction being always from one to many. But this very fact reveals in the individual the constant tendency towards association. It develops into elements that have the appearance of individuality, but are, at the same time, united and have an appearance of sociability. Let us turn to the manifestation of these tendencies in the societies formed, on the one hand, by the bees and ants and, on the other hand, by man.

The social life of bees and ants has attained a high degree of coördination; its discipline is wonderful, but, at the same time, it is fixed and rigid. These insect societies are admirably adapted to their environment, but that environment is limited, and no further progress seems open to them. We saw that instinct reaches its highest development among the bees and ants. Does it not seem as though life had tried at once to obtain a society united through intuition yet progressive, but that the effort was premature; intuition had to be condensed into instinct, and the form of society reached was not one open to further advance?

This failure of intuition to manifest itself Bergson himself insists on; also on the necessity of the assistance it gains through intellect. But he does not connect this in any way with society, that is, he does not form any view of a united society based on intuition, one to be obtained by the right development of the societies of the present. These human societies, he recognizes, are open to progress, but they are divided and incessantly struggling with one another. It seems as though harmonious association had become incompatible with progress in the higher forms of evolution. The greater part of the impulse, which Bergson says we must metaphorically call that towards social life, has passed along the line to man; the rest has been developed in the abortive form of insect societies. But Bergson adds that there is really no particular impulse to social life, only the general motion of life creating new forms along divergent lines.

If what has been suggested as to the purpose of the life principle is well founded, the above statement of course stands in need of modification. Indeed, in any case, since the essence of life is to develop in the directions of unity and of multiplicity, one of the fundamental tendencies of the vital impulse must be toward the drawing together of what has been separated out from it; the reorganization of partially differentiated tendencies. Bergson may only be insisting, however, that the

particular forms of social life are unforeseen expressions of tendencies in the vital impulse, which does not work in view of a definite plan, but simply seeks to develop its inherent tendencies as fully as it is able. This point, which he always and consistently maintains, has already been discussed in connection with the purpose of the life-principle.

Social life among men is open to progress. There is, further, a continually increasing common fund of acquisition. Language stores the intellectual achievements of mankind, and social life preserves their efforts. Thus the level is continually raised from which each successive generation can push on to further achievement. The comparative success of human society, Bergson says, is only an external sign of an internal superiority. Through man's intellect the vital impulse has, to some extent, recovered its freedom. But, even so, man does not carry with him all the tendencies of life; of some of them he has preserved but little.

Society, however, is not a mere association of individuals for practical purposes, but has a deeper basis of union. A society where each should become conscious of himself as constituting a part of an interpenetrating whole certainly would appear merely to follow further what is indicated in Bergson's thought. Bergson, as we have seen, is continually insisting on the growing disorder of evolution. There is identity of impulse, it is true, and in this sense living beings are one; but there is no common aspiration. Each individual and species uses the energy it has received from the whole vital impulse in its own interest; each thinks only of itself; and thus discord arises. But, although this is true of the majority of the forms of life, need it be true of human society? Although the only forms of social life which have attained union, those of the insects, have become fixed and incapable of further progress, need there always be incompatibility between harmony and advance? In man we have the possibility of intuition, that is of instinct become disinterested and conscious of itself. The equilibrium attained through this sympathetic bond should not be incompatible with progress, any more than intuition itself should be unable to dwell beside an intellect which minds its own business. A society based upon intuition should escape the fixity of those societies whose basis is material. The common impulse should become common aspiration and the disorder of society should tend towards order, as soon as its members become fully awake to their essential oneness, primarily with their fellow men, but even beyond that with the rest of life and with its principle. The present struggle of society may be compared to the suspension and unrest felt when, in mental effort, the images are on the path of organization. The direction of the life-principle is surely being best expressed in so far as there is fuller realization of

social harmony as based on the interpenetration of the deeper experiences of men.

It will be through intuition, Bergson himself says, that men will be raised above themselves; everyday life will be warmed and illuminated; we shall be revived. "A beneficent fluid bathes us whence we draw the very force to work and live. Of this ocean of life in which we are immersed we ceaselessly inhale something, and we feel that our being, or at least the intellect which guides it, is formed by a kind of local solidification."<sup>1</sup> "A complete and perfect humanity would be one where the two forms of conscious activity would attain their full development."<sup>2</sup> Although intuitions may, in the human beings of today, be vague and fleeting, yet they furnish us with the starting-point and indicate the direction to be followed. Through intuition we shall feel ourselves united to our fellows; it will establish "sympathetic communication" between all living beings and so we shall enter the proper realm of life, "reciprocal interpenetration, creation continued indefinitely."<sup>3</sup>

So far Bergson himself goes. Is not this justification enough for the view that the direction of the life-principle could be best expressed by a society which, although in no way relinquishing its progress through coöperation in the conquest of the material environment, should yet reach harmony through the sympathetic union of its members in their attempted coincidence with the purpose of life?<sup>4</sup> It is of course always possible that such an ideal may never be realized, but we cannot now say that it is unrealizable. It represents the development of the present situation in the direction which seems best to express the purpose of the struggle of the principle of life and, as such, furnishes a standard of guidance in social affairs.

The problem in any particular case is always as to the development of the situation in accordance with the principle of securing progress while still maintaining harmony. There can be no fixed rule; a perfected social consciousness would be one maintaining itself always, as it were, elastic, capable of plunging into the region of deeper experience at any moment in order to obtain the impulse guiding it in its return to the practical affairs of life. Always there must be a certain mean

<sup>1</sup>*L'Evol. créat.*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup>*Id.*, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup>*Id.*, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup>In a recent book, "Some Neglected Factors in Evolution," by the late H. M. Bernard, a new theory of the evolution of organic life is put forth, and the future development of human society is treated in a manner which fully supports the broader view of society which is suggested in this section.

preserved between attachment to and detachment from the practical affairs of life.

The guiding principle of social life must take into account all things to which human beings attach value; it must fulfil and not destroy. It has been through a social life which has been based on coöperation in practical affairs that the development of a higher form of society has been made possible. Beneath what appears as the merely superficial intercourse of men there is a slow ripening of the realization of underlying sympathetic unity. And thus the ideal of social life, while going beyond any development of our merely practical common experience, must not, on the other hand, go too far to the other extreme of ignoring this practical experience and dwelling only on the deeper experiences of mankind. For instance, the superficial layer of feelings and ideas which are the current coin of common life are still necessary. The important thing is that they should not be too solidified, that men should, in the more important affairs of life, be capable of being themselves, of feeling deeply and personally, and of acting in accordance with these feelings.

The necessities of the society Bergson deals with are not superseded. "Good sense" which he defines as "a continued effort of mind adapting and readapting itself ceaselessly" is as important as ever.<sup>1</sup> But this must not be all. Not only should all take their share in the common work of society, but all should have the opportunity of being fully themselves. Of course, once more, the extreme limit is not desirable; what is here implied is self-development in harmony with the development of others. Always Bergson's view of tensional experience necessitates the recognition that tendencies must be blended and must interpenetrate in order to develop most successfully, they must never be carried to the extreme. This would require the abolition of artificial distinctions and limitations. Wells rightly ridicules those who see men "as samples moving," for the belief in classes as real can lead, he says, to nothing but a progressive misunderstanding of mankind." Each man is a personality, and from a fuller development of all personalities much may be expected.

At the present time it is only the few who have vision; here and there the man of genius catches a glimpse of reality and seeks to interpret his vision to his fellow men. The work of genius is accepted, Bergson says, because of its sincerity. Sincerity is communicative and carries with it the power of conviction because of the effort it leads us to make, to see sincerely in our turn. With the wider development above indicated we may look for more rapid advance in the spread of

<sup>1</sup>Le rire, p. 187.



depth of vision among mankind. In particular when women are fully awakened to their place in society and the peculiar opportunities before them, the benefit should be great. In the early stages of society their subordination to men may have been necessary. It has become increasingly less necessary and yet, to this day, they are not only hindered in taking their full share in the world's work but this limitation has led to the fact that the majority of them still have no conception of their capacities and opportunities. The work of women in society must, of course, always be different from that of men. Indeed, in general, their all-essential function must always continue to be the development of the personalities of children. But may they not, at the same time, possess the very powers which would be of most importance in furthering the future advance of society through its realization of its essential unity? It is a popular saying that women are more intuitive than men, and may this not have a foundation in fact? To man preëminently has the conquest of the material environment been due. Woman has had practically no active share in it. But she has perhaps kept closer to the forces of life since on her more fully rests the continuance of the creation of the race. It is in man that intellect has reached its fullest development. This does not mean that women are *ipso facto* incapable of as high intellectual development as men. Until recently they have not had the opportunity of comparing their abilities with those of men. But, in any case, by far the greater part of the intellectual achievement of the world has so far been that of men. With the awakening of women and their freedom from restrictions, should they too not achieve, and perhaps more fully than men, in those spheres where they may be even better adapted than are men to reach a vision of reality? They should be able to add much in particular to philosophy and to religious, ethical and educational theory. But they must also be capable in the practical application of such theory, and here it is that intellect is so necessary. It is also, of course, necessary in the attainment and development of any hypothesis grasped through intuition. Consequently what has been said here furnishes no argument against the fullest possible education of women. Indeed, this is absolutely necessary in order that they may attain the best means of expression and that society may receive all the advantages they are peculiarly fitted to bring to it.

Such a recognition of the claims to free development possessed by all human beings, whether it is based on the realization of the oneness of all humanity or not, yet tends to deepen our realization of this fundamental unity. Each in reaching deep into himself will feel himself one with his fellows. He will become more capable of real sympathy. Indeed, in the

cultivation of some of those violent feelings which are capable of awakening immediate responses in the breasts of others a powerful means may be found of arousing the apathetic. Through this growth of sympathy and recognition of unity, all should come to be animated with a common purpose, the welfare of the whole society. There would be realization that to this aim each personality must subordinate himself and, even though such subordination may prove painful, in it there would still be found the highest possible development and fulfilment of personality.

One more question presents itself. It may be said that what is gained in extension is lost in tension and depth. If a general realization of union with all men be attained will not this acquisition of deeper experience for men in general prevent the few with peculiar capacity from reaching even deeper into reality? But this objection does not do full justice to the nature of tensional experience. A social life of mutual sympathy must be based upon the capacity each has of plunging deep into himself and there approximating to coincidence with the principle of life. Of such approximation some must always be more capable than others. In approaching coincidence with the life-principle, man realizes that he himself and all his fellow men are, as it were, pulses of the eternal life which must therefore throb in unison. It is true, however, that a man cannot reach the deepest sympathetic coincidence of which he is capable with all mankind. Although artificial distinctions should be eliminated, natural ones must remain. In family relationships and close friendships fuller sympathy can be reached. The deepest experiences of love and friendship are, however, always rare. No such opportunities for sympathy deeper than that which we can extend to all men should be neglected. Indeed, we must struggle to preserve such sympathies through the experiences of practical life, for they are not merely passive but, like all fundamental realities, they furnish us with a principle in the light of which we may live. We cannot, again, in the affairs of this human life, always keep our full realization of such fundamental realities. Indeed, we may even find in their first realization a beauty whose quality we can never reseeze. But, at least, we can live through the impulse they give us, and now and again reach fuller realization of their meaning. These deepest experiences should not cut us off from the rest of mankind; through the increased fulness of our own lives we should be more capable of genuine sympathy with others.

#### THE GOOD AND HOW IT IS KNOWN.

We now have the necessary material from which to derive some of the more definite ethical implications of Bergson's

thought. What follows, however, must still be more or less general in character. A discussion of any of the numerous unsettled but pressing problems of the day is not within the scope of an essay such as this. Any attempt of this sort would involve an exhaustive study of the evolution of morals and of society, and a detailed survey of present conditions. It is much to be hoped that, as the result of his present researches, Bergson will himself have a valuable contribution to make in this field. But all that has so far been said as to the ideal development of man, of society, and of life in general has its bearing on such problems. In so far as Bergson's view of tensional experience is accepted, the method of approach to all such particular problems has already been suggested. In what follows we shall hope more clearly to define the place occupied by each individual in their solution.

We must now turn to a general theory of the moral life. For this we have been prepared by all that has preceded. The subject matter of ethics has already been discussed. It is human conduct considered from the point of view of its being good and right, or, on the other hand, evil and wrong. Accordingly, we first discussed the conditions of human conduct. We found what Bergson had to say explicitly on the nature of life in general, of the individual, and of human society. We then suggested what additions and modifications might legitimately be made in keeping with Bergson's direction of thought. We saw how human activity was determined by inner and outer conditions and, again, what it effected, what changes it was enabled to bring about on those conditions. At the same time we found that life was the manifestation of a developing principle. The world could not be said to fulfil any preordained plan, but it had purpose in the sense that, through its evolution, there is the effort to develop certain potentialities in a certain direction. Hence right and wrong, good and evil gain objective meaning. Conduct is right in so far as there is furtherance of this direction and wrong when it has the opposite effect. In so far as good and evil are distinguished in meaning from right and wrong we may say that good conduct is directed by the recognition of values, which are such because of their relation to the direction of the developing principle of life. Evil conduct involves the disregard of such values.

We can at once see, however, that, while there is this objective side to human conduct, while we may ask how far an act furthers or hinders the objective good, there is another side to the matter, that of the attitude of the individual. So far, little has been said on this subject, a consideration of which must, however, form the center of any theory of the moral life.

The field we must now cover divides itself naturally enough.

In the first place it will be well to sum up our conclusions as to the objective good, the ideal direction of development for man and for society. This being done, the important question will arise as to the method of moral knowledge. In what way is the individual aware of the right or good both as the furtherance of a general direction of development and in the particular situations of life? These are the questions which will occupy us in this section.

We are further concerned to know what it is that we judge as right or wrong in judging the individual, and with this the next section will start. We shall have then to consider what is meant by voluntary action, in what sense the individual is a free agent, and how far he is justifiably held to be morally responsible. The judgments of society have an all-important place in the formation and modification of the individual, and so we shall be led to deal with the growth of the moral life. In the last section we shall consider some of its main phases in the individual. It is, however, through the moral growth of its members that society advances morally, and some account will be given of how this is brought about. We should thus be able to conclude with a fuller appreciation of the meaning of the moral life.

We have tried to show that we may posit an objective good, that is, that there is a direction of development in the evolution of life and that this direction may, in a certain sense, be called purposive. Briefly, the conclusion reached was that there is a creative principle of life whose nature must approach more nearly to that of consciousness than anything else within our experience. In its infinite tenseness of duration there are unnumbered interpenetrating potentialities. In order, however, that these may be developed, the life-principle limits itself in the creation of worlds. That part of the life-principle evolving in each world is what Bergson calls the vital impulse of that world. Owing to it, there is the constant struggle of all forms of life to subsist and to perpetuate themselves. Through this unconscious struggle, however, the purpose of the life-principle slowly progresses. In man, consciousness has, to a large extent, rendered itself master of the material environment. There is possibility of the freer development of the potentialities inherent in the life-principle in the form of human personalities. In proportion as man unites himself with the part of the creative principle of which he personally is a manifestation, he should realize his union with all life and more particularly with other human personalities. Man has always been essentially gregarious, a member of some form of society. But it is evident that the form of society best expressing the purpose of the life-principle cannot be that formed primarily for utilitarian purposes. The ideal development of



society must be in the direction of an ever increasing sympathy, a consciousness of the underlying union of all personalities as interpenetrating and yet distinct parts of the principle of life. Such an ideal development can only be brought about by the recognition of the right of all personalities as such to the fullest and freest self-development possible, consonant with the similar development of all others. Hence, through the furtherance of such an ideal, the creation of personalities (which Bergson explicitly says must be the purpose of this life) is brought about. So far as human life is concerned, its good must be found in the furtherance of this direction of the reciprocal development of man and of society, of personalities individually and collectively. In the measure in which any man follows this direction, he is approximating coincidence with the creative principle of life.

All this may seem somewhat commonplace. Man has long been familiar with the principle of love for God and man as the basis of morality. What we have attempted to show, however, is that this principle, according to the fundamentals of Bergson's philosophy, has its basis in the very structure of things. It is the absolute standard of morality in the sense that it must serve as the objective test for all human values. It is not, as we have said, a transcendent norm, which earthly values attempt in some measure to copy. It is a principle expressing the furtherance of a certain direction of development and is immanent in all human values, giving them their meaning as genuine values.

In the first chapter we saw in a general way how the good is known by the individual. We saw that, in so far as we coincide with the direction of development of the life-principle, we have intuition, a form of knowledge which is not relative but only limited, seizing as it does something of reality itself, and which is at once knowledge and action, in that it is essentially an impulse in a certain direction. Now so far as an individual consciously tries to act rightly, he does so in view of some background of belief or conviction. He must have general principles with which he is armed to survey any particular situation and discover the end that he feels to be good. We concluded that, in accordance with Bergson's thought, this background must be an intuitive one in proportion as it embodies any objective value or good. The individual in identifying himself with certain principles is, whether consciously or not, reaching closer to the principle of life of which they are particular expressions, and is furthering its fullest development through the intuitive impulse thus imparted to him. Genuine standards must thus be formed, attested to and adhered to through intuition, and it is on the basis of intuition that any unanimity as to moral standards has been reached.

That this intuitive factor is in most cases unrecognized does not invalidate this fact.

Genuine intuition is infallible but this does not mean that all directly perceived qualities are intuitive. For many moral standards the sanction of intuition has been claimed, when they are, in truth, the result of the earlier experience of the individual or the race, or even have no better basis than inveterate prejudice. In so far as the latter is true such standards can in no case be intuitive. Intuition implies, as Bergson repeatedly insists, a grasp of the whole, an unbiased point of view; in intuition there are no conceptual extremes; these are the result of intellect which develops to the limit the blended tendencies which may be grasped in intuition. In so far as they are the result of earlier experience they may or may not embody intuition. Indeed, as we saw, intuition is but another name for man's fullest experience of reality. But, on the other hand, standards may be empirical simply in the sense that they have previously been found to be useful principles whereby ends have been formed and conduct directed. Once more we must enquire here what useful means. In so far as superficial and practical purposes have been accomplished through their agency, they probably have not much intuitive basis. But in so far as they have tended to produce consequences furthering the objective good and are accordingly judged good, this is due to intuition. The point to be insisted on is that, in genuine moral knowledge, there is always involved more than mere calculation on the basis of the facts of superficial experience.

The test of a moral standard is its consequences, for through them we can judge how far the purpose of life is furthered. But the appraisal of the consequences must again be on the basis of a deeper experience; it must involve intuition. We are thus brought to the consideration of the directly perceived quality which attaches to ends. For not only the general principles but the particular ends which are evolved through their instrumentality in particular situations are susceptible of immediate valuation on the basis of their consequences. We shall soon have more to say in detail of the formation of such specific ends, but we have already seen how deliberation involves the forecasting of the consequences of various possible ends. As we imagine the changes to be effected through our pursuance of any particular line of action, there is a direct valuation of these changes. In accordance with what has been said this direct sense of worth, in proportion as it displays genuine discernment of the good, is based on intuition, resulting from a coincidence of the self with the direction of the purpose of the life-principle. On the other hand, the direct valuation may take place as the consequence of any depth of

experience or as the instinctive reaction of any tendency or tendencies of an individual. Such judgment may display all degrees of sensitiveness to the genuine good, but, in proportion as a person really seeks to identify himself with the good, he is increasingly gaining in depth of experience and this in intuition. Intuition of the good, as we suggested, when followed in action, must reinforce itself and bring with it further knowledge of the good, increased harmony with the purpose of life and hence a stronger impulse in its direction. We shall later see, in considering the growth of the moral life, that to procure sensitiveness to the good we must rely on a continual development and deepening of the tendencies of the individual. Obviously, from what has been said as to the objective good, an ever increasing sympathy for our fellows marks the growth of our harmony with the life-principle. The instinctive sympathetic reactions should gradually deepen and thus change in quality, till this sympathy has become the dominant impulse of the individual. In this growth the reappraisal of the value of consequences of former actions must, of course, play a part. It is through them that we may judge of the depth of our real harmony with the purpose of life and may be led to struggle for deeper vision. For there must be continual progress, continual effort at the deepening of moral knowledge, and no man is justified in being satisfied with what has already been achieved and in considering this a guarantee that, in the future, his judgment and action are assured of moral worth. For intuition is an impulse and all efforts to live in its light, even with ever increasing depth of vision, still remain incommensurable with it.

Through his developing experience a man should thus be led to ever deeper and more reliable sensitiveness. But we must now turn to a consideration of how, in each situation, the concrete end is chosen. The factor of sensitiveness to the good has been discussed and found to involve intuition in so far as it is a real valuation. What now is the process of deliberation in the formation of a specific end?

As we saw in the first chapter, whatever depth of intuition we may have reached, however closely we may be following the direction of the life-principle, this furnishes us with no rules of action. All we have is an impulse, dividing itself, it may be, into specific impulses taking the form of principles in the light of which various types of situations must be met. It is true that such impulses have the power of casting out ends absolutely incompatible with themselves, but there still remain, in most cases, several ends whose incompatibility with the direction of the good is not so directly perceived. We are not yet fully aware of what they involve. It is at such a juncture that deliberation must intervene. Of course the specific situa-

tions of life are on a plane of more or less practical experience, being parts of the every-day life lived in common with our fellow men. As such we saw that deliberation as to their ends involved both intuition and intellect. As always in dealing with tentional experience, any description of the blending of tendencies or faculties involved cannot give more than an artificial reconstruction of the real process. Such an analysis must however, be attempted.

Granted that the individual has a certain degree of coincidence with a good principle and is thus pushed on through intuition, how, in the particular situation, does such an impulse function? In each particular situation there is an end which, if acted upon, will best fulfil the purpose of life; this is the good of that situation and reinforces the direction of the intuitive impulse. In the first place, a thorough survey of the situation must be made in imagination. Its possible ends will then appear and their consequences must be forecast by the intellect. The intuitive impulse makes itself felt at this stage by rendering the individual more thoughtful; that is, his survey will be the broader and fuller in his eagerness to develop the good in proportion as his experience is the deeper. Intellect will more really be the instrument of intuition. From this point of view also we see that the truly sympathetic standpoint is that from which the most adequate survey of a situation may be made. Not only is the sympathetic person the most sensitive to the good, but he is also the most thoughtful, the most apt to be able to make a fuller forecast of the consequences of any course of action he chooses. Once the ends of the situation and their consequences are adequately present in consciousness, intuitive sensitiveness to the consequences that are best will intervene and enable the individual to value the various ends. True sympathy is intuitive and it is in proportion as it is more fully used as the principle of judgment that thoughtfulness and sensitiveness develop, and that moral judgments gain in genuine discernment of the good.

Not only, then, is intuition operative in the acceptance of and effort at following general principles, but it can manifest itself definitely in the specific situations through which these general principles concretely influence the course of experience. There can thus be a blending of intuition and intellect in moral judgments and consequently in the acquisition of moral knowledge, just as in other forms of judgment that do not involve the questions of right or wrong, but that seek to reach the knowledge of some truth. Since, however, the moral life should be of vital interest to all, while the problems of philosophy are the concern of only the few, intuition should oftener be operative in attempting to follow the good than in the search for the true. The only meaning a specialized moral



sense can have is that an individual, in so far as he has intuition of the good, is carried by its impulse in his judgments. In this case, the intuition is not only a vision of developing reality, but involves the active endeavor at coincidence with its direction, in that it is valued as good. As already suggested, since the intuition of the good involves following a direction of action and does not merely give an impulse to our thought, as does philosophic intuition, it should the more readily admit of reinforcement. The terms the philosopher must use are incommensurable with his vision, but although the particular acts of our lives may be said to be incommensurable with the impulse they express, still it is contained in them; they are living realities and not artificial reconstructions as are all intellectual terms. And thus the intuition of the good is not given once for all, but we should be capable of an ever increasing penetration into this fundamental experience and hence should receive an increasing impulse to right action. Through each successive particular action, we should become increasingly aware of the far-reaching meaning attaching to all conduct, its integral place in the development of reality.

This view of intuition as active in the moral life cannot give any static form of morality. The development of the purpose of life is the good, but this is a development; undoubtedly the general principles that further this are always good, but they do not furnish any ends capable of automatic functioning in particular cases. The course of our moral experience should be one of constant discovery. The philosopher may spend his life in the expression of the impulse imparted to him by his vision, but the duty of every individual as a moral agent is to struggle on in the light of the vision he has, in order not only that through him the purpose of life may be developed, but also that his vision of this purpose may be increasingly deepened. Through such deepening of experience he is increasingly able to further the good.

To this struggle each individual is constantly invoked by the fact that moral situations inevitably do arise. Moral life, like all life, has as its material certain tendencies. Among these, conflicts are bound to arise, and the individual is thus called upon to choose between incompatible ends. Even if his tendency is to rely on some set of moral rules, these cannot possibly apply adequately to every situation which may arise. Still less can a moral principle apply automatically in particular cases; reflection is needed in each such case. For concrete situations cannot have been fully foreseen before their occurrence, and thus cannot have been adequately reflected on.

Not all human conduct has moral import; it may be merely practical action, the choice of one of several possible valuable ends as that most suitable, or more often the choice of the

means to some such end. But any act may at some time become of moral significance if it chances to conflict with some tendency of the individual, and thus gives rise to a judgment as to the value of the end it expresses. On the other hand conduct now habitual may have involved a moral crisis at some past stage when it was unorganized, but, as an end, conflicted with some habit or impulse.

The intrinsically moral situation is thus one in which specific ends are called in question. Not only have we to choose in the sense of deciding what act to perform, but, back of this, there is always the creation of the self as a part of society and of the life-principle. In choosing, a man is developing his potentialities in some direction, whether this be a direction reinforcing the good or whether it be the reverse, and this development must have far-reaching influence, not only on himself and the course of his future conduct, but on other personalities.

Duty, in the sense of right action in general, is the struggle for participation in the purpose which is in part expressed through our lives, and requires our active adherence and effort in order to be fulfilled in us. But we must again insist that there is no genuine adherence to such a purpose, unless it expresses itself in the attempt to realize the full meaning of each particular situation. In each situation also the good must be followed for its own sake, not as a means to anything else. Of course we may say that the good end is chosen as a means towards furthering the purpose of life, but this is the good, and to say the good end is chosen as a means to the good is simply to say it is chosen for itself.

Through the constant search for the good end of each situation, the self best develops itself and thus fulfils the purpose of which it is an integral part. Sentimental admiration of the good and right in general, without any genuine attempt to work it out in particular cases, is thus a real evil and in no way sanctioned by this view as to the place of intuition in moral judgments. Again, a mere abstention from wrong brands him who considers he thus fulfils his duty as lacking any intuitive impulse. To follow the direction of the good demands positive choice and action in which, of course, the attempt at abstention from evil is incidental. It is however in no sense the foundation of morality. Genuine intuition of the good involves action, the following of an impulse. Bergson is reported as saying that, if men knew their duty, more would try to do it.<sup>1</sup> We have tried to show, taking his philosophy as a basis, what the nature of this knowledge of the right would be. Undoubtedly, in so far as men had genuine intuitive grasp of the

<sup>1</sup>*New York Times*, March 10, 1912.

good, they would attempt to follow its direction. But we are thus brought to emphasize the fact of will. The moral life involves not only thoughtfulness in the forecast of ends and sensitiveness in appraising their value, but, in its effort and struggle, it implies a resolute identification of the self with a chosen end, and perseverance in action. In other words, a moral act must be voluntary. We must now enquire more fully into the meaning of the word "voluntary," and so reach further conclusions as to man's freedom of action and his consequent moral responsibility.

#### VOLUNTARY ACTION AND RESPONSIBILITY.

The indivisibility of personal experience and its constant change is the basis of Bergson's thought. The child is a mass of interpenetrating tendencies and potentialities, but at any later stage in life, though these have of necessity been developed, conflicts still arise; there is still the problem of the formation of character, although it is not continuously so urgent as in the child. Such conflicts arouse the consciousness of the individual and lead to reflection. Reflection has as its material the ends involved in the conflicting tendencies, and its aim is the attainment of a unified course of action in which such tendencies are modified in their future functioning. The self thus develops, continually forming new coördinations and reorganizations of its inherent tendencies. New habits hold the former habits in check and thus give the opportunity for further growth. To be capable of the fullest development, a personality must at any stage have attained organization of his tendencies and yet be flexible in order to admit of still further modification. It is in this process of self-development through reflection that we must find the meaning of the voluntary act.

Now, in so far as an act is voluntary, this means that we have an end in view; we are not moved to action simply by a motive that is blind, but by a tendency aware of itself. That is, we intend a certain foreseen outcome of our action. In so far as motive and intention may be used synonymously there is implied a foresight of the consequences that would probably accrue.

If motive means, however, all that moves us to action, it is a broader term than intention. For, in no act, however voluntary, are we aware of all the tendencies of which it is the momentary overt manifestation. Without, for the moment, considering the part played by accidental and external circumstances, it is on this account that, even in the most thoughtful action, all consequences are seldom foreseen.

But motives and consequences cannot be set off against one another as distinct objects of moral judgment as has so often

been the tendency in moral theory, although they can, of course, be distinguished. Their function only appears when reintegrated in the indivisible development of an action. The consequences of our actions are of course of the utmost importance; the aim of the good action is to further the purpose of the life-principle. As we have already seen, the consideration of past consequences must play a large part in our apprehension of the meaning of the tendencies that are ours. Those consequences, in particular, which were unforeseen are of value in reinforcing or in inhibiting the tendencies that led to their production. It must always be remembered that tendencies are in continual change; we are never actuated by identical motives and we never can foresee all the consequences of any action. But the consequences of tendencies, which in the past moved us to action, none the less give us the clue to the most probable consequences of these tendencies in their present stage of development. It is also, as we saw, through an imaginative rehearsal of the consequences of the possible developments of any particular situation, that there is determination of the good of that situation. Simply to have a well-meaning attitude towards life in general and not to seek to discover how this may bring about good consequences in each situation is the merest sentimentality and cannot lay claim to intuitive actuation. Foresight of and adequate sensibility to the consequences of our actions does, however, depend on the attitude of the individual. If he really means well, that is, if he wills that his actions shall be the outcome of constant endeavor in the discovery of the good, his survey of the consequences will be the broader and his direct perception of their worth the keener.

Again, from still another point of view, it is the attitude of the individual that must be the primary matter in a voluntary action. For a man may desire to achieve a certain end and endeavor to the best of his ability to do so, but his overt action may be frustrated. And again, good consequences may be the result of the merest accident, there may not have been any volition in the matter. Always bearing in mind that a complete separation of attitude and consequences is not legitimate, still it is in the attitude of the individual that his moral worth resides. Ultimately, then, since the attitude of the individual at any given moment represents his character, we may say that it is this that we judge. For it is in the voluntary action that we look for the nature of a man's character.

We must now ask what the place of freedom is in the voluntary act? The question of freedom has already been discussed as it is included in Bergson's thought. Here we must consider it in order that the meaning of moral responsibility may be determined.



We saw in the last chapter that the purpose of all life was a free and full development of all its potentialities. In this world, this can only be partially accomplished, and then by a never-ceasing struggle against the inertia of matter. Matter, however, can be used as the instrument of freedom, and, in human beings, this is effected through the formation of habits which hold others in check and allow ceaseless new endeavor. The purpose of the endeavor of each individual should be self-creation, the best development of his personality. In so far as in his actions, through which this self-creation is continually accomplished, he expresses his inmost personality, he is free. But the exigencies of life demand a certain working adjustment so that the unique personality of each individual may be capable of action in common with others. Our experience must be what we have called *tensional*, that is, while we for the most part live a practical life of more or less superficial experience, we should be able to plunge deep into ourselves whenever the situation calls for an important decision. In order to try to express this, we introduced a distinction between character and personality which must not, however, be taken too literally. It does not imply reduplication of the self. Personality, we suggested, might be considered as our inmost core—those potentialities in each of us which it must be the purpose of our lives to bring to full development. In so far as we express our personality, this is freedom and the most absolute freedom attainable by us. But, as Bergson says, we are not the principle of life in its purity, but we carry within us the inertia of matter. Life for each of us must be a struggle, a development of the forces carrying us onward through those that drag us backward. In every-day life a crust of habit encloses us, and, in so far as our actions simply express this superficial part of ourselves, we are mere automata. In fact, all that is not intimately fused with ourselves and has thus entered into the development of our personality is a hindrance to our free action. The word character has been here used to express not only our personality, our inmost tendencies developed or undeveloped as they may be, but all our tendencies and habits whether deep or superficial, all that may determine us in action. This character is the result of all our past experience and it may more or less fully express what is most genuinely ourselves, what has been called here our personality. So it may be seen that, to express one's character in action, is in one sense to be free; that is, our action is expressing the fact of our preference and choice, but again, in another sense, action is only really free in the degree in which it expresses what is most fully ourselves. We are thus the freer, the deeper we can plunge into experience, the more tensely we organize all the past which has been really

ours with the present, in order to create ourselves. Whether we freely create ourselves or no, our character is being modified all the time and our subsequent freedom as agents is bound to suffer in so far as our character is not expressing the deepest in us. This deepest in us is a part of the principle of life, an impulse whose fullest and freest development is, as we saw, the good of the individual. When the situation presents an opportunity for genuine self-creation and so for furtherance of the good, in proportion as the individual does not act freely he is not acting morally. His choice does not then represent the best in him. Still such choice may be voluntary, that is, the individual may choose a certain end, intending that his action shall effect the resultant consequences of this end; and, further, the act may be voluntary in that it represents his character, though not that which is deepest in him.

We thus see that there may be more or less freedom in what is commonly called voluntary action. It is, however, in voluntary action in face of incompatible ends that we have our greatest opportunity for free action. For voluntary action involves deliberation as to our tendencies and their probable consequences, awareness of the ends of our action. In reflection we have the habit *par excellence* which holds other habits in check. The self has the chance to hold back from overt action and to develop itself through its various hesitations till its ultimate action represents the deepest that is in it. We must repeat that there is no separate self actuated by separate motives and thus choosing between external ends, but there is a continual evolution of tendencies and impulses and thus a continual change in the ends foreseen, till the self finally identifies itself with one direction of action. The more fully this is the identification of our fundamental personality with a course of action, the freer is our choice and the better do we create ourselves. Hence we can see that the more thorough reflection, the more intensely conscious are we and the greater opportunity is there for free action. Even those of us who reason most very rarely act freely, Bergson says, but he is not dealing specifically with moral situations; it is certainly here that the impulse of our lives would be most likely to make itself felt and, sweeping aside all superficial deliberation, would cause us to identify ourselves with an end which we thus accept as our highest good. Still, it is true that rarely if ever are we as free as we might be. We do not act on the basis of what is most ourselves; we have not freely and fully developed our personalities. Self-creation is the purpose of our lives and it is for this we must be responsible.

The fact of freedom is the fact that we *can* reach the inmost impulse of our lives and be led by it in incessant self-creation.

Moral responsibility finds its meaning in this same fact. Whether we do develop ourselves freely or no, we are responsible for so doing in that it can be done. This statement is subject to qualification, of course. The body and brain of an individual may not furnish him with an adequate instrument of free action, or external circumstances may have so warped his character that he has been forced to part with his real power of choice. These considerations shortly will meet with further development. But the fact remains that, in varying degrees, we do not only blame others but also ourselves; we feel morally responsible for our actions. That is, we feel ourselves responsible for our characters, that they should be good and that our actions should adequately express them. We are intrinsically responsible for being free. In so far as our character is not as good as it might have been we blame ourselves, and also, in so far as, at any juncture, we allow inertia to overcome us and do not really act from the best in us. If moral regret is genuine, it should take effect in helping us to regain our freedom in reforming our characters, so that, through them, the purpose of our lives may be developed. The distinction drawn above between voluntary and free actions may be made clear from this point of view. Voluntary actions may be good or bad in varying degrees, but, in proportion as an action is free, it is good. An individual should be blamed where he chooses the bad because his choice is not really a free one. In intuition of the deepest in us is freedom. We not only then know the good but choose to do it.<sup>1</sup>

But we must turn to the question of responsibility from a more external point of view, that of society. The view that human beings must be regarded as intrinsically responsible for their actions is borne out by the attitude of society towards its members. In society, at its present stage of development, all the emphasis is on the practical experience of mankind, and little advance has yet been made towards a recognition of fundamental harmonious unity. Yet we found that society was animated by an instinct leading it to demand of its members, not only more and more perfect adaptation in the conquest of the material environment, but also a certain degree of self-consciousness. It is true that it censures too great eccentricity; man must be able to live with his fellows the life of common superficial experience, but yet he must know himself. He is held responsible for awareness as to the meaning of his own powers and tendencies, and thus for their con-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Donn. *imméd.*, p. 182, Note 2: "The process of our free activity continues, in some way, in spite of us, at all moments of duration in the obscure depths of consciousness, . . . the very feeling of duration comes thence, and . . . without this heterogeneous and indistinct duration, where the self develops, there would be no moral crisis."

sequences. The individual is blamed by society not only for his voluntary acts in which his intention is bad, but even for consequences accruing from actions that are not at all intentional. Negligence and carelessness are culpable, for it is necessary for the welfare of society that the individual should mean what he is doing. Thus society instinctively blames the man who does not act freely; his acts should be voluntary and they should be free. In proportion as they are so, they will evolve the good not only of the individual but of all other individuals.

We have said that society blames instinctively. This is important for here we have a tendency inherent in the life-principle itself, manifesting itself first blindly, simply in the desire for retribution and then, as it comes to consciousness of itself, seeking to justify itself in view of the good consequences thus attained. Indeed, it is often argued that the only justification there can be for punishment, particularly in cases of lack of foresight, is that through its means individuals may be led to fuller awareness of themselves and of their place in society. The educative function of punishment cannot be overemphasized, but it must be remembered that punishment is justified, since individuals are, as we have seen, responsible for acting freely. Looking backward, it is just that they who have not done the good which they could do should be punished; looking forward, punishment should be educative. Through the reconstruction of his conduct thus enforced upon him by its disagreeable consequences, the individual should be led to fuller self-consciousness and should attempt to reform his character. How this is to be brought about is one of the important problems of the all-important subject of education.

Society has not yet advanced far in its recognition of the true use that should be made of its retributive instinct. Like all unenlightened instinct it aims at a general result and in particular cases is apt to be wrong. Not only is there no general insistence on the educative function of punishment, but society also punishes those who are not actually responsible.

We are thus brought to the consideration of the limitations which must be placed on moral responsibility. The individual life we have seen to be a tendency, a continual evolution of potentialities. In each individual, consciousness must make use of the powers of matter, that is, the brain must be the instrument whereby the individual's potentialities, his personality, may be developed. In so far as the brain is the adequate instrument of the action of the individual, he must be held responsible for free action. But insanity, idiocy and all forms of brain trouble do not allow consciousness its fullest



expression. With the further development of science, we must hope for fuller knowledge as to mental incapacity, that is, as to the inadequacy of the brain as an instrument for free action. The individual can only be held responsible when he is really capable of being free.

We are once more brought to the importance of education. For, in the child, there is as yet no adequate organization of the body and more particularly of the brain, as instruments of action. This must be the first purpose of education. Only through development of these instruments can the deeper potentialities which constitute the child's personality have the opportunity for free development. Warping of the brain, however brought about, accidentally or through the effects of bad education, sets limits to the responsibility of the individual. In order that punishment may be just, such external circumstances must be determined. We can see, also, why the age of the individual must always be taken into account; in youth the brain has not attained the organization which allows it to function as an adequate instrument. It is thus just that the individual should be judged by individual standards, so far as we are concerned with his intrinsic responsibility, but judgments according to the standard of society must be enforced in order to bring him to a sense of his responsibility.

On society, further, depends the effective freedom of the individual. In the freedom it gives him from the control of others and in the resources it puts at his disposal, it furnishes him with the means of expressing himself in overt action. From one point of view the individual is not less responsible for attempting to act freely even if his action is prevented from bringing about the desired consequences. But, at the same time, if the accomplishment of consequences is invariably frustrated, it is more than probable that this will react on the individual's character. His development will be thwarted, in that the number of stimuli to action will be greatly diminished and that he will not be led to recognition of the full consequences of his conduct. In the process of bringing the individual to a recognition of his responsibility the consciousness of his liability should play a large part. Mere fear of punishment or disapprobation does not foster moral growth. But these agencies may be used gradually to lead him to consciousness of his function as a responsible member of society. In giving the individual the opportunity for free action and holding him liable for the consequences of his conduct, moral growth may be fostered. Throughout we have dealt with morality as a developing process. Now, in conclusion, we must turn, a little more in detail, to some of the stages of growth.

## THE MORAL LIFE AS A GROWTH.

Society is prior to the individual in the sense that each individual at birth becomes a member of some already existing community of individuals. The child begins life in the family group and is led to accept its standards. The family, again, has its setting and derives its standards from the larger social group of which it forms a part. The customs of the groups we have been and are members of furnish most of us with standards, and even for the thoughtful these standards must form the soil from which the development of reflective individual standards must spring. It is thus obvious that, at any time, society and the individual are apt not to be far apart in their moral growth. It is only the very exceptional individual, who can advance far beyond his own time. For society gives its members their opportunities for development and for the effective action whereby they may be led to fuller knowledge of themselves. Society seeks, though unconsciously, to raise each of its members to its own level, and, again, some individuals always push beyond the customs of their time and, in their turn, consciously seek to promote a different social order. We shall deal with this reciprocal process a little more fully further on. In the meanwhile let us turn to some stages of the process whereby the moral growth of the individual is furthered.

We have to some extent seen how society instinctively approves or condemns its members. This instinct becomes more and more enlightened in proportion as society advances to a consciousness of its educative functions. The purpose of all institutions in any society should be the development of its members. Its customs and laws should be enforced in order that the individual may be brought to consciousness of the part he should play, of his social obligations. Not only, as we have seen, should these obligations appear binding for fear of punishment in the event of not meeting them, but a sense of responsibility should continually be developed.

It is evident that the fundamentally important problem for education is the development of the young. Society's greatest opportunity presents itself in dealing with their immature and plastic characters and in bringing them to a consciousness of their powers and consequent responsibilities. Consciousness everywhere, as we have seen, insinuates itself into matter and, through first adopting the habits of matter, is gradually able to use the latter as its instrument. Life everywhere makes new starts all but passively, and human personalities are no exception. The problem for each individual is the fullest development of the powers of personality, indeed the choice of personality; for the child starts life as many nascent inter-

penetrating potentialities, in the course of whose mutual development character is formed. But, just as the young plant must be trained upward so that it may develop its powers in the right direction, so must the primary impulses of the child be directed in such a way that he may attain self-control and effective use of all his tendencies. He must be brought to consciousness of himself and must realize which of his tendencies should be fully developed and which should be held as the instruments and means towards attaining this end. In so far as the child can gain control of those tendencies through which he may develop the good he becomes an increasingly responsible member of society.

Let us see a little more in detail how this is brought about. At all times, moral growth is effected through bringing our tendencies to consciousness and securing their effective use. Habits of effective functioning must be attained, but not habits that are too rigid, for they must always be capable of modification in new situations. There is always here the practical problem of working out the mean between bringing everything to consciousness and acquiring the unconscious spontaneous habits of action.

Above all, the habit of reflection is necessary. Through this habit the individual becomes increasingly self-conscious; he has a fuller intuition of the impulse which is his personality. But, to secure the adequate and active functioning of this impulse, to plunge into deeper experience and thus really to reflect, is a slow growth. The child acts from impulse, and it must be the aim of those around him to make him accept his acts as his own and hold himself responsible for their consequences. In the discovery that further consequences accrue besides those he intended and, in particular, when such consequences are incompatible with his aims or when he is blamed for them, he is led to reflect on the meaning of his tendencies and on what are the really desirable ends they may attain. In this process, of course, the sympathetic encouragement or the disapprobation of those around him is essential. He cannot at first appreciate the value of the consequences of his act, and these must be gradually pointed out to him.

The enforcement on the child of implicit obedience should always be used as a means to attaining such valuation. With the child himself obedience must be primarily taken as an end. To obey those in authority over him is right action since, in obeying them, the best consequences will supposedly follow and he will thus increase in discernment of the good. Obedience, however, has served its purpose when a character has been formed which is truly thoughtful and desirous of discovering and furthering the good.

Hope of reward and fear of punishment may prove of some

assistance in the development of real responsibility, but they are dangerous tools and tend more often to weaken the motives that should lead to right action. It is true, as Bergson says, that although we pass from one thing to another by degrees, this does not mean that they are of the same nature. An example, we have seen, is the development of true modesty from what is, at first, merely the fear of ridicule. Throughout the child's development, there should be a process of a similar kind. Prohibitions and restraints must be used, but always in view of fuller, freer growth and use of the powers of the individual. Through being taught to subordinate the ends which originally arouse his strongest desires, to other ends which he may apprehend if he reflects, a sense of duty will be developed. Again, he must be taught through observation of the fact that those around him are affected by his actions, that the good is not a private matter, but that his increasing happiness is found in an increasingly social end. We shall soon deal more fully with these two most potent means of moral growth. They increase rather than diminish in significance as maturity is attained. But it is all-important that, in the child, the habits of seeking to do his duty and to advance the social good should be well-rooted. Of course these may be said to be included in the habit of genuine reflection, that is, of attempting to follow the deepest and best impulses of one's nature and through them being led to discover the good of each situation.

The child's instinct of curiosity is particularly valuable in leading him to this habit of finding out the effect of his actions. In evaluating the importance of their consequences, his natural sympathetic tendencies, the generosity often so noticeable in children must be continually reinforced in opposition to the narrower and more self-seeking tendencies.

The object of all education, not only of education in the moral life, must be the fullest development of the potentialities of each individual. Standards of education can only have a meaning in that they have been found on the average best to develop the potentialities of the greatest number. There is always, however, the pressing need that every child should in some way have individual care and attention. The object of the moral education of the child is, however, accomplished when he has attained enough organization of his potentialities to make reflection possible and is actuated by an active impulse in the discovery of the good. He is then at the stage when restraints should be removed and his future self-creation be allowed to rest with himself.

We have already referred to the place held by the sense of obligation in moral growth. We have seen that conflicts are continually bound to arise among the tendencies of the



individual. The natural inclinations which are primarily the most urgent must be restrained in order that they may be but the instruments of higher goods which the individual comes to apprehend by reflection. Through adequate reflection, he should plunge increasingly deep into experience or, in other words, draw closer to the best development of his potentialities. When these higher and more remote ends are distinctly apprehended as conflicting with impulses which represent the more material aspects of man's nature, and when the individual feels that these higher ends ought to be followed and yet can only be so by restraint of his natural inclinations, then the sense of obligation arises. In the process whereby the individual gains fuller freedom of action, through real self-development and choice between incompatible tendencies of the self, this sense of being bound by duty to perform such and such actions, must always play a large part. It represents an aspect of struggle and effort which is necessary to the moral life. Matter always tends to retard the forces of life and to pull them in its own direction. Against its inertia life must struggle unceasingly, opposing the most pressing impulses and breaking formed habits or controlling them by the formation of others. On the receipt of some stimulus it is always easier to follow the line of least resistance offered by immediate action, than, through an effort of attention, to seek to grasp the true good of the situation and thus to struggle, against resistance, to mould the future aright. The sense of duty arises in this struggle between what is there and accomplished and what is still only possible and dependent on the earnest effort of the individual. This is not the mere formal sense of moral obligation which has played such a part in moral theory, but a sense of obligation which takes its meaning from the very real opposition between the tendencies of the self which make for its best development and those impulses which find their legitimate place as subordinated to and used by these higher tendencies. It is a necessary accompaniment in the creation of personality.

This sense of duty in the narrower meaning, the feeling of obligation, is rooted in the fact that there is duty for man; that is, there is a general direction of right action, a development of the good through coincidence with what is deepest in him. Just as this intuitive impulse to follow the good must manifest itself through the particular situations of life in the effort to discover their really desirable ends, so the sense of obligation is not a merely general thing. As an aspect of the desire to follow the good, it functions of course in this general sense, but usually, in special cases, it is largely determined for each individual by his social environment and functions. That is, for each individual, there are certain ends which are habitually

thought of as those to which other claims must be subordinated. Such duties arise from each and every social relationship. Once again, of course, the recognition of such duties should not function automatically. On the basis of what the individual recognizes himself bound to do there must still be reflection as to special cases. It is only to be expected, however, that the recognition of duty should involve particular recognition of the rights of others as against the immediate impulses of the self. For we have seen how, in the intuition of the direction of the good, there is of necessity a search for the good of others. The deeper the experience of the individual and hence the more potent the intuitive impulse in him to follow the good, the more does he realize his relations with and hence his obligations to other personalities.

Another aspect of the evolution of the moral life we found to be the development of an increasingly social end. This, on the basis of the theory here developed, is of course concomitant with the reinforcement of the intuitive impulse, resulting in closer coincidence with the direction of the good, that is, with the life-principle and with all other personalities in varying degrees. That the development of the moral life is this evolution we have already tried to show. We must now turn to some of the stages of this development and the meanings there to be found for some of the familiar distinctions of moral theory.

Desire has a bad name, not only in moral theory, but in popular speech, and its restraint by reason is urged. In truth, any theory which separates these two factors and opposes them to one another is one of the artificial substitutes for reality which, according to Bergson, are the usual result of intellectual analysis. We have seen, in discussing the sense of obligation, what meaning this opposition has. All desires, under certain circumstances, develop the good. Except in abnormal cases of perversion and degeneracy they may all be said primarily to have good objects. There cannot, however, be harmonious coöperation among all the tendencies of the individual, for it is of the essence of life that growth should introduce incompatibility among tendencies which, in a nascent and undeveloped state, exist in harmony. Hence, in order that there may be growth, some tendencies must be subordinated to others. In each species and in each individual, there is only part of the vital impulse. This fact is manifest from another point of view, in that each such part of the life-principle has material form. Hence the primary impulse of such parts is to preserve themselves, to seek their own isolated good rather than to coincide with the forward struggle of the principle of life. In man, we saw, there is and should be increasing recognition of the fact that he is a part of this life-principle, and

thus not isolated from its purpose, and that, in the fulfilment of this purpose the highest development of his own and of all other personalities must be found. Man's desires, consequently, are good in so far as they further the life-purpose, that is, in so far as they function in a certain way, those apprehended as lower being subordinated to and instrumental to those that are higher. This apprehension of the degrees of value of different desires is, as we have seen, the function of reflection. Hence "reason" has been given a good name in that it is felt that it provides the higher ends. The truth is that, in so far as reason is a coldly intellectual calculation of the consequences, there is no guarantee that it should further the good. In fact, it may succeed in quelling some genuine and noble desire. But, so far as "reason" means intuitive impulse whereby only the best development of our tendencies is assured, it is certainly good. On the other hand desires are only bad in expressing material tendencies which blind us to this deeper experience and hurry us into thoughtless and selfish action and into taking the means for the end.

So far as desire is lack and incompleteness and thus urges to action it is unpleasant, but in the development of its tendency, its progressive fulfilment and the anticipation of this fulfilment, it is pleasurable. Pleasure is not, except in certain special cases, the end of desire; it is the concomitant of the fulfilment of desire. We saw how, throughout the evolution of organic life, it has been a means of securing the preservation and propagation of life. In man it has not suddenly become of a completely different nature. In the fact, however, that in man consciousness has, to some extent, freed itself, it does of course allow of an increase of meaning. An animal will follow the pleasurable path of its desire, so will the child at first impulsively. Unless he feels it his duty to control his particular desire, the adult human being will also do so, but it is not pleasure he seeks, it is a particular end or object, the attainment of which is pleasurable. We must always remember that, although we thus speak of pleasure, there are no such things as two exactly similar pleasures. Every conscious state is qualitatively unique, as Bergson often insists. Each such qualitatively unique pleasure thus lies in the unique progress of a unique desire or impulse to action. The pleasure increases as attainment is the more complete and testifies to the intensity of the desire.

We have had occasion more than once to speak of Bergson's distinction between pleasure and joy. We contended that it cannot be clear-cut, it must be a matter of blending and of degrees. As experience deepens, the fulfilment of tendency brings with it an experience of an increasingly deeper quality than pleasure, which may be the accompaniment of our more

superficial experience. Thus, in terms of what has throughout been spoken of as *tensional* experience, there is a gradual transition from pleasure to joy, as we pass from the more superficial to the deeper, from the material to the spiritual. The term *happiness* may be used to cover both pleasure and joy. In the sense that all men endeavor to fulfil their desires and tendencies, all men seek happiness. Happiness is not that to which the ends of action are means; these ends of action and their progressive fulfilment are our happiness. The important point morally is the quality of our happiness. It may be superficial, passing pleasure, but again it may be the joy which comes of creation, of fuller coincidence with the principle of life. This latter is the highest happiness we can attain in this life, and it must at once be seen that the ends in which it is to be found are those into whose discovery most intuition has entered. Objectively, they are those ends which aim at the highest happiness of all men, for the more fully we follow the direction of the good, the more of necessity do we consider the good of all, that is, their fullest and freest development, and hence their truest happiness. It thus becomes clear that the common welfare is not an end set over against the private happiness of the individual. The well-known opposition between egoism and altruism cannot be sustained in any clear-cut form. Its meaning can, however, be found from considering the very set of facts dealt with throughout this section. It is not so much that the egoist balances his own welfare against that of others, but that, in reflecting upon the ends of his action, he is apt to neglect those consequences which affect the happiness of others and to be more or less impervious to their appeal. True altruism, on the other hand, should not be the conscious attempt invariably to subordinate one's own interests to those of others. This, indeed, often leads to mere sentimentality and does not allow of seeking the true good of the situation. The altruist is rather one to whom the consequences of his actions always tend to appear in their social bearings; who is always sensitive to the welfare of others. We can see that the more truly altruistic the individual, the more fully he is acting on the basis of his deeper experience and from the intuitive impulse which leads him to survey each situation broadly and in view of the good of all concerned. The individual's impulses are not primarily selfish or unselfish. They may be completely impersonal or they may be for the self or for others. We have seen that all desires are primarily good; it is only as some ends become incompatible with others that there must be choice and subordination of the lower to the higher. These tendencies which aim at self-preservation are, of course, on the whole, conservative of social values too. The individual cannot be set over against the society of which



he forms a part. Still it is easy to see why egoism justly receives so bad a name. For those objects of desire which primarily appeal most strongly are apt to be the lower and more material tendencies of the self, those that have their legitimate place as subservient, but that are, through their urgency, apt to blind the individual to all but the very partial end of their immediate satisfaction. Altruism, on the other hand, though often applied in the wrong sense, is, when genuine, justly esteemed. It involves, as we have seen, the search for the whole good of the situation, the welfare of the individual and of all other personalities involved. Further, this welfare must, on this basis, be the fullest happiness of all concerned, that is, the fullest development of their potentialities. The genuine altruist does not merely seek to dispense benefits, but to help those around him to help and thus develop themselves.

In line with the philosophical distinction of the noumenal and the phenomenal, the supernatural and the natural, there has always been a strong tendency in moral theory to identify the self with those of its tendencies that are the more material and that tend to resist higher ends and aspirations. The good has been placed in some outer source. This is, of course, wholly unfounded. Human nature is blended, its tendencies partaking in varying degrees of what we may call the spiritual and the material, the forward impulse of the creative life-principle and the inertia due to its limitation. Hence the undue emphasis placed on self-denial and self-sacrifice loses its meaning. In that there is the need constantly to subordinate the lower tendencies to the higher, we must, it is true, make sacrifices. But this is for a positive end. The aim of morality cannot be negative; it is to develop the good. If self-denial is found of use in this process it is thereby sanctioned. As an end in itself it is of no value and may function to the detriment of the development of the more inclusive ends. Men are, of course, over-ready to assert themselves, and hence, by way of contrast, self-sacrifice has been so often insisted on as one of the chief ends of morality. Its only legitimate content is the identification of the self with the good.

Here, then, we have another aspect of the growth of the moral life, the continual expansion of the ends of the individual whereby he the more fully considers the welfare of others, that is, the increasing subordination of the selfish and narrow sides of his nature to the good of society. This, we need hardly say, is but an aspect of the reinforcement of the intuitive impulse of the individual, whereby his actions more and more fully coincide with the direction of the good. All that we have done is to reach from the ethical point of view the conclusion which was obtained in dealing with person-

ality. The fullest development of personality must of necessity involve its increasing interest in and sympathy with other personalities. Concomitant with such a development, the ends of the specific actions of the individual must become more and more inclusive in their survey, and conducive to social welfare in their results, if these are not externally obstructed. Hence we may say that what the individual finds really desirable, that in which his happiness is involved, is a gauge of his character. In that true good is to be found in deeper experience where there is, in some degree, intuitive interpenetration with all other personalities and hence sensitiveness to their welfare, we may say that there is development of the distinctively moral self in so far as there is increasing interest in society.

Through this consideration of the moral growth of the individual we may the better appreciate his position in society. Each individual should, through education, be the inheritor of the values that have been achieved and, through earnest effort, should seek still further to advance the social good. We have seen that the individual is trained by means of the formulated morality of his time, embodied in the laws and customs of society. In particular, in so far as he is held liable for his actions, this should serve to disclose to him his responsibility and, in so far as his action is exempt from external restrictions, this should stimulate him to strive for fuller freedom. But if he does attain possession of himself, that is if, to some degree, he reaches the intuition of the good in fuller self-consciousness, the good is no longer for him the mere observance of law. The process of moral growth has been increase in genuine thoughtfulness which manifests itself in reflection and in wider sympathy. But, at the same time, this progress must be valued as the direction of the good, and, on this account, conscious adherence must be given to all ends which further it and fulfil it.

So far, then, as the relation of the individual towards society is concerned, there is a transition from mere observance of law to a very different attitude. Customs and laws are measured by the standard of the individual and, on this basis, there is either adherence to them, or protest against what is felt to be their inadequacy. Judgment of the actions of others, of the customs and laws of society, must always be a form of moral behavior for which each of us is responsible. In that morality is formulated in laws and rules, it is bound to be somewhat static, to represent the past rather than a direction of growth; it naturally at any time lags somewhat behind the standards of conscientious and earnest individuals who are making every effort to advance the social good. This reaction of individuals to the existing social order may be the means of social recon-

struction and reformation but, again, it may simply lead to selfishness and self-assertion of the worst sort. There is no justification for the emancipation of the individual from the existing morality, except in so far as he is acting wholeheartedly in the interest of what he feels to be a better social order which may be furthered by his efforts. When an individual simply emancipates himself in that he feels his own powers restricted, he is liable to overlook the highest welfare of others and, in so doing, to fall very short of his own best self-development. In the evolution of social morality through the efforts of the individual, the same principle applies as in all phases of life. The attained must be preserved, but it must not prove a hindrance to further growth; there must always be the mean between appreciation of and right use of the established, and a pressing forward to the new. On the basis of the intuitive impulse, complete emancipation from social customs can never be sanctioned, but, on the other hand, there is implied the continued effort to transform them and thereby the more fully to follow the direction of the social good. The stronger the intuitive impulse in a man, the more capable will he be of furthering real social progress. For his actions will then be rooted the deeper and will coincide the more closely with the direction whereby the purpose of the life-principle is being evolved.

We have already attempted some description of the direction that seems indicated, on the basis of Bergson's views, as that of the ideal development of society. There can be no doubt that there has been some advance in the general recognition of the fundamental unity of all mankind and of the right to free development possessed by all personalities as parts of the life-principle. Specific advances can be measured by their furtherance of this direction of development. Just as in each individual moral growth may be described in terms of increasing self-consciousness, so in society there has been evolution in the direction of the substitution of morality based on reflection for merely customary morality. The latter still, of course, forms the nucleus of the morality of even the most progressive societies. Still, the emphasis falls more and more on the responsibility of all members of society for a reconstruction of the customs of society or, at least, for a continual discovery of the fuller meaning of such customs. The more advanced societies are coming to look to the future and not to recline almost exclusively on the past; they no longer idealize a golden age of antiquity, but look to the progressive working out of social betterment in the future. At any time, attention is liable to concentrate on some particularly urgent problems, while other social customs continue for the time being to pass unchallenged. But, even so, society is increasingly interested in progress and is thus increasingly dynamic. Progress, we

saw, might take the form of merely material achievement and it is here that man has accomplished most, but, in the moral evolution here dealt with, this material achievement must be considered a means. In proportion as man conquers the material and makes of it his instrument, he has the opportunity for further spiritual growth. From this point of view, the injustice of the class-distinctions of both past and present is obvious. Material resources are now practically in the hands of the few; the few tend to be absorbed in the pursuit of wealth and neglect the spiritual life they are at liberty to pursue. The masses, on the other hand, being deprived of material resources, are also absorbed in their attainment and, in addition, they have not even the opportunity of real freedom of self-development. But, with the increasing emphasis on reflective morality, class distinctions are bound to be swept away. There is the increasing demand that the purposes of society be worked out by all, that all should be responsible for leading the moral life and that in order to secure this, society must attempt to give equal opportunity to all. On the basis of intuition, we can see how a wide sympathy with all humanity is necessarily implied. In realization of the true nature of society as a community of interpenetrating personalities, different standards and different opportunities for different groups can have no meaning. All must have the opportunity freely to develop themselves and thus to follow the purpose of life. On the other hand, in so far as class and group distinctions do break down and there is fuller inter-communication between all men, there is increasing stimulation to reflective morality. Society progresses, we repeat, through the efforts of individuals, but, in its very progress, it continually stimulates new efforts. In proportion as there is fuller realization of its all-important educative functions, we may hope for increasingly rapid progress.

It must not be forgotten that, side by side with the forces that are making for social betterment, there are also disintegrating forces. As the emphasis comes to be transferred from the observance of customs, there is, on the one hand, opportunity for reflection as to their intrinsic meaning and use and thus for their transformation and, on the other hand, there is the tendency to empty such customs of all moral significance for the individual; in the latter case he feels himself simply freed from restrictions. But advance has always been secured through the taking of greater risks; and there has undoubtedly been a rise in the general level of morality. Social ideals increasingly embody ideals which are really moral in that they further the direction of the objective good of society. In one sense, there is no guarantee that individuals are more moral today than formerly. But that they have a growing opportunity of



achievement cannot be denied. Intrinsically, however, individuals are always responsible for freely furthering the objective good in so far as external circumstances permit; they always have been and they always will be. For the moral life must always be a struggle; it calls for all the energies of each individual, however much may already have been achieved. There should be no tragedy in old age if this be realized and if the powers of the individual have been rightly developed and used. The objective good of the individual and thus his moral end is self-creation, and his constant problem is the discovery of those specific objective ends whereby he may best realize his potentialities. But this self-realization may seem almost paradoxical, for it is accomplished through self-forgetfulness. Men find their lives in losing them in the service of the good. At times, it is true, the definite thought of self-realization may legitimately be present as a desirable consequence of action. This is a stage in the development of the potentialities of the individual in view of more effective future development. But, in general, the individual must simply lose himself in coincidence with the direction of the purpose of his life in order to accomplish this purpose and freely to create his personality. The growth in self-consciousness here insisted on does not imply a continual consideration of actions and their consequences in view of their effect on the self, but it does involve this very plunging into continually deeper experience where the meaning of the potentialities of the self is discovered in their use as furthering the good.

All those traits which may be called virtues spring from the intuitive impulse, and the deeper the source of this impulse, the more is it truly sympathetic. For, in this deeper experience, we reach closer to the principle of life and to other selves. Love has all degrees of intensity, but everywhere it is that from which all the virtues spring. Thoughtfulness often has the meaning of regard for others, and its connection with genuine sympathy is thus recognized. In so far as we act in accordance with the impulse of intuition in which we are in sympathetic contact with others, we are apt to be thoughtful with regard to the consequences of our actions as they affect these others. Hence, in so far as we really love, we are apt to have genuine wisdom in the discovery and development of the good. Love, too, leads to justice and cannot be set over against it. For justice aims at equality of opportunity for all. We should seek to help all to the means of full and free self-development, and this is what we must desire for those we love, since this is their highest good and happiness. It is needless to say that absolute sincerity is involved. Love, wisdom and justice are otherwise mere empty words. All these aspects of the intuitive impulse in the direction of the

good are not mere attitudes; they inevitably lead to action. Thus this impulse develops courage, the persistent patient endeavor to fulfil the good and willingness to suffer all things for its sake. But it seems needless to develop this subject more in detail. In proportion as the individual is fulfilling the purpose of the life-principle, his conduct increasingly involves all the virtues. These are not only implied in the fullest development of the individual personality but have the effect of furthering the social good. And thus, reciprocally, human personalities, individually and in society, work out the objective good. Disheartening as are the evils many and manifest in social life and slow as may seem the evolution of the good, yet we must hope and believe in its supremacy.

On the basis of Bergson's fundamental view, this inspiration to the good life has its roots in the nature of experience itself. We have not only the facts of superficial experience beyond which all fleeting visions must be dismissed as dreams or as too incomprehensible to be included among the experiences on which we may base conclusions. But there are, as we have throughout tried to show, other depths of experience. This we have sought to convey by speaking metaphorically of tensional experience. We have, it is true, only fleeting glimpses of what we have called the experiences of a different dimension from those of our ordinary practical life. But, in Bergson's thought, these have a setting and a meaning which give us the clue to all else. The difficulties of such a theory are obvious. The more real an experience, the less accurately can one speak of it in terms of ordinary speech. Realities must be suggested rather than described; and only an artist like Bergson himself is capable of such a task. We can but hope, however, that the images here employed and the analysis made may have indicated some of the directions that ethical theory must take if it is to be based on a view of life such as that suggested by Bergson's thought.

Moral optimism is legitimate, as an accompaniment of and incentive to the ceaseless effort to make the good prevail. But the good cannot only mean a more desirable future state of society considered simply as a community of individuals on this earth. In so far as the individual feels his highest happiness to rest in his furtherance of such an aim, we may ask if he is not deluding himself. Is he not identifying himself with the purpose of life in such a way that he feels, though unconscious of the fact, that his own self-development will thus be still continued? Again, he does not realize that this future higher state of society is not so ideally desirable, unless it involves more than this life will ever be able to bestow even under the most ideal earthly conditions. Indeed, as the material conditions of the lives of men are gradually bettered,

as they more really are free to live fully, there will be increasing emphasis on those spiritual goods whose fullest development can never be realized in experience as limited in this life. All those tendencies of individuals that are spoken of as mystical, often with contempt, have their significance. This life has its meaning as embedded in a vaster process. The moral life has its meaning in that through it we best develop the direction of this process. We are parts of a developing principle, parts on whose efforts depends the evolution of the purposes which are for us the objective good. We all have a term in which we must seek to develop ourselves and then we, as personalities, pass from this world. The death of individuals, as Bergson says, is willed or at least tolerated by the life-principle in order that its processes may be the more fully accomplished through new instruments.<sup>1</sup> But, in so far as through each one of us, as a part of the life-principle, some of its potentialities have been developed, such values must be preserved. This cannot be accomplished simply through the objective consequences of the lives of those who have lived well. The faith which must be our highest inspiration, through which alone the completest joy and peace of mind can be secured, is that through the moral life all that is of the most value will be furthered. Not only should man's life on this earth acquire continually fuller meaning, but those elements in it which are most fundamental, our deepest experiences of love for others and for God, should then come to be held as bringing us increasingly closer to that fuller life of which this life is but a stage.

All the distinctions and laws of the moral life must thus take their meaning from the fact that its struggle is the educative process whereby the inherent potentialities of the life-principle reach definition. Through it should be evolved a communion of personalities, and thus the development of the principle of life immanent in them.

<sup>1</sup>L'Evol. créat., p. 268.









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